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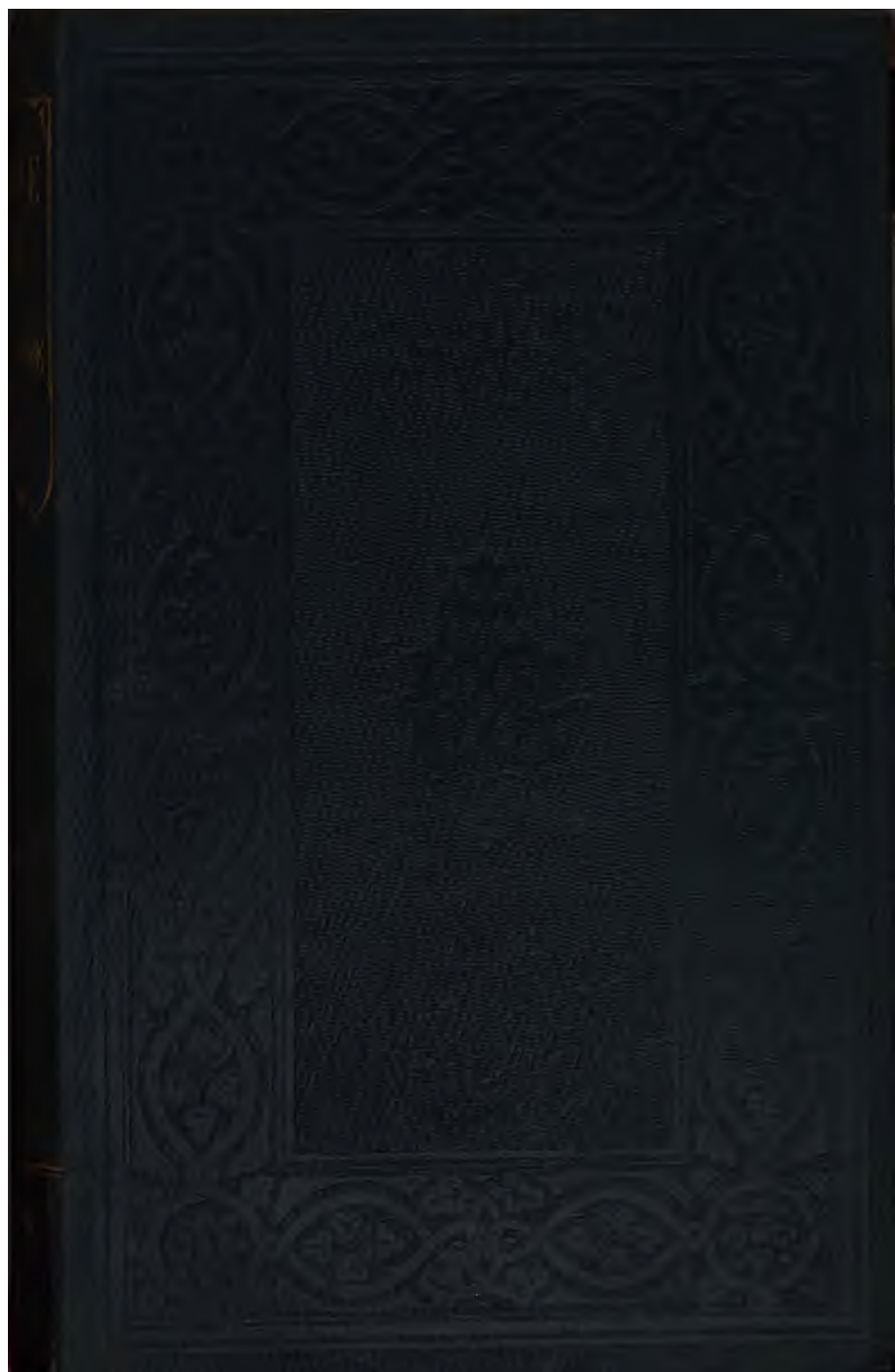
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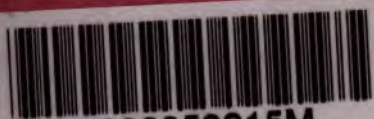
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M A D E L I N E C L A R E .

CHAPTER I.

A N C I E N T D E S C E N T .

THOSE are beautiful girls, are they not ?
And that stately matron with them ; she, too,
must have been beautiful in her day. And
they have the air of high breeding. They
must be of note ; but no, they pass by un-
greeted, save by the curious gaze of that
group of officers, and that cluster of youths.
The hostess evidently does not think much of

them, and she is not sufficiently well-bred to conceal it, and the Honourable Mrs. Mervyn, married to a brother of the first Lord Fawley, (his father had been a sales-master) bows very coldly indeed, as their glances chance to meet.

Who are they? Nobody seems to know, so they must be nobody. Ah! here is Shirley; he knows, for he has just spoken to the fair girl in the plain white tarletane.

“Who are they, Shirley? the one so dark, the other so fair.”

“Oh! Mrs. Pendrell and her daughters; don't you remember old Pendrell's widow?”

To be sure we do! Old Colonel Pendrell, who fought at Waterloo, and a descendant of the ancient Welsh family—and married, now we recollect, a daughter of Harrington Aylwards, a man of equally old blood?

“ Ah ! yes, that is very true,” Shirley says ;
“ but they are miserably poor, quite paupers,
and altogether out of the world.”

Hark ! a rustle of silks ; it proceeds from
that pompous-looking dame, who seems to
disdain the earth she walks on. Yet she does
not look distinguished nor handsome, nor at
all well-bred, nor anything but a vulgar fat
woman—vulgar because full of *prétension*.
Ah ! but Mrs. Mervyn seems charmed to see
her, and smiles her sweetest and talks her
blandest. That is Lady Jaconet, (Shirley tells
us) herself a cit’s daughter, and married to Sir
Peter Jaconet, the linendraper’s son ; they are
enormously rich, and she gives a ball next week,
and all the Mervyn clique are to patronise it.

How busily yon group are chatting to
each other ! and when they dance they
form their own quadrille, and waltz with

their own set. And how coldly they one and all look on that timid young thing, whose dress has got entangled in one of theirs, and who blushes so prettily, and apologises so sweetly, as she disentangles it; and then, to her relief, recognising an old school friend of hers, whom she has often helped, in an exercise or out of a scrape, stops in delighted embarrassment to express her happiness at meeting—but evidently the happiness is not reciprocal.

The days when Charlotte Marabout and Ada Percival were friends, are passed, and Charlotte Marabout, the honourable Charlotte (her father was an Union peer, and Lady Marabout an attorney's daughter) cannot, when among her other honourable friends, encourage this impertinent familiarity. Yet, 800 years ago, the founder of Ada's race fought beside Wil-

liam the Norman, and her name has descended a heritage from her ancestress Ada—a princess of the House of Blois. But she, too, is poor, and lives with her grandmother in a cheap suburban residence, and knows no one, and cannot push; and so, is no acquaintance for Charlotte Marabout, nor for Lady Jaconet, nor for Mrs. Mervyn.

Now, it could not be expected that Bertram, holding these sentiments, could be any great favourite with society; but, in truth, he knew little, and cared less, about society; he heartily despised it, and preferred his dog and his gun to all the balls of all the Mervyns and Jaconets. He liked much better, too, to talk to the gamekeepers and villagers of Matcombe, than either to Mrs. Mervyn or Charlotte Marabout. Consequently, both Mrs. Mervyn and Miss Marabout pronounced Bertram ‘not respectable.’

Hark ! you young man or young woman, beware how you despise respectability : it is a great ally, or it is a potent foe. You may be young and beautiful, and even wealthy, and yet you cannot afford to want respectability—it is the jewel of great price. I could fill pages with examples of those who were all that I have said—young, rich, lovely, and flattered, and who, intoxicated by these advantages, thought they could trample upon the world's rules, and neglect the maxims of respectability. They played at that game to their cost, I can tell you. First the whisper arose, then spread, and became a shout ; while friends warned those who would not take the warning. On, on they went at this desperate game, they, it may be said, against the world. Can you, for a moment, doubt which won—they or the world ? Is it necessary

to tell you how all their advantages were staked, and lost one after the other, till even Hogarth's 'Last Stake' involved not a more desperate game than theirs? Yet, do not think that I wish to erect respectability into an idol for you to worship. No;—at your age, with your young high heart, and eager-throbbing pulse, I could not ask this of you. Yet, I know there are times when, to please the respectable portion of the world, you must forego the conviction, strong to you as the Gospel,—must relinquish the noble aim and the fresh impulse—must trample on the fallen, and crush the lowly;—then, at a crisis like this, you must not hesitate. No;—throw respectability to the dogs, rather than barter away your humanity to purchase it. Be just, be true, be generous first, and, perchance, you will find—for the world is not yet so

bad as to forbid it—that having sought these things first, the other will be added unto you.

CHAPTER II.

CHISWICK.

THE London season was at its height; but Madeline looked in vain to catch the form of Philip Clarges at the balls of the ensuing week. Not till Saturday night, when at the Opera, and listening to Grisi in 'Lucrezia Borgia,' did she see him. Then, raising her eyes, she became conscious that he had entered their box, and was conversing with Lady Caroline. He soon came behind her chair,

but did not speak till the curtain fell on the second act.

"This is Grisi's finest part," he said; "she is thought, by some, to rival Mrs. Siddons."

"How ridiculous," said Lady Caroline, "to compare them—Grisi is not an actress."

"She has not won her reputation as one—yet she is an actress, and a great one, in 'Lucrezia.'"

"I like this opera," said Madeline; "the interest deepens so intensely; there are so many passionate human interests at stake."

"You possess the power of enjoyment, Madeline," said Sir Charles, who was of the party, "in great perfection; you were enthusiastic at Matcombe about sunsets, and water, and cows; now you are equally charmed with crowded theatres and Italian singers."

‘Am I so great an enthusiast?’ said Madeline, with a radiant smile, as she turned to parry Sir Charles’s attack. “It must be, then, because happiness and enthusiasm go together.”

The curtain rising, prevented Sir Charles’s reply.

“Do you intend to be at Chiswick on Wednesday?” asked Clarges.

“Will Wednesday be the Horticultural?” asked Lady Caroline. “I promised to take Lady Mansergh.”

“You will go, of course!” said Philip, addressing Madeline.

“I hope so.”

And on the following Wednesday they met at Chiswick. It was a sunny July day, which the days of the Horticultural fête cannot always claim as their characteristic—and

Madeline again enjoyed some of those hours of intoxicating happiness whose existence is so brief, and of which even to youth pertain so few.

They strolled through the pretty, though tame grounds of the Horticultural Society, and then passed to the velvet sward, and snowy arcades, and high green hedges of the classic abode of England's most princely peer.

“‘Too small to inhabit, and too large to hang to one's watch,’ so Lord Hervey described the house before us; yet life might pass happily here!”

“It depends on whom we pass it with,” replied Madeline.

“True,” said Clarges, briefly—while scarce had the sentence escaped Madeline's lips, than she wished it recalled. She knew it was a

mere remark, and yet she would rather it had not been made.

“This is, in truth, classic ground,” remarked Clarges—“the roof beneath which Fox and Canning breathed their last, becomes for ever hallowed by their memory.”

“Yet this spot does not owe everything to association, or to its being classical,” said Madeline; “I must claim for it beauties more positive.”

“It has them in abundance. Nothing can be more exquisite than the taste of him who owns these grounds; nothing more munificent than his disposition. Where within the hum of a city like London could we find trees, and water, and landscape, equal to what we have here? It is indeed, an Eden worthy of that gifted and good man whose life has been one long blessing to talent that has been linked

with poverty, or genius failing beneath the struggle with adversity; the patron of the poet, the artist, the actor—the friend of all whose suffering or whose need have reached his notice.”

“You are right, Mr. Clarges,” said Madeline, hurried out of reserve; “it is a great and noble thing to use riches and talents thus—to walk through life strewing flowers on the path of all who want or suffer; raising the artist from his unmerited obscurity, and lifting the poet to the eminence his poverty denied him. Oh! that all the peers of England were like this one!”

“And that all who hear of acts like his, could sympathise with them as you have,” replied Clarges.

And his words, his glowing cheek, his earnest gaze, sent a sweet and rapturous

emotion through the soul of his listener—an emotion long dwelt on, often recurred to, for on it was born a hope and an ecstasy that lurked long in the heart ere they were confessed on the outward life of Madeline Clare.

CHAPTER III.

FIRST LOVE.

IT was strange how often Clarges and Madeline met during the ensuing month—stranger still, that these meetings seemed to owe so much to chance; so little, if anything, to premeditation. At exhibitions — at flower shows—at balls—at concerts—at the opera, it appeared the merest accident that brought them together. So a month passed and Madeline, towards its close would gladly have

thought that it was not all chance — that Clarges did seek her, did find pleasure in her society; for it was vain to imagine that she did not find an attraction in his. Gladly indeed, would she thus have excused to herself the strange fascination which she felt drew her thoughts towards him, but in his manner there seemed nothing which breathed of more than passing interest in her, with whom he yet conversed oftener than she had ever seen him do with others, while his words — if they exercised a potent spell on the mind of his listener — made no appeal to her heart and if they found an echo there, they did not seem to have sought for it. Like the chance breeze evoking melody from the harp they wandered by, nor paused at their own music. To Madeline there was indeed a strange fascination in the language of Clarges — in that

melancholy, rather blending with, than breaking through, his ordinary manner. Perhaps of all hers was the disposition to recognize a charm in that very earnestness and gravity which might not have won similar favour from others. It seemed to her to throw a rich and mellow glow on character, to invest it with a touching grace that made tender appeal to her best feelings and gentlest sympathies. Hers was precisely the nature at once grave and tender, gentle and romantic, to be led in thrall by this grave and subdued charm of melancholy in another. Those qualities which belong alone to the sunshine, which revel in the brightest colours placed in the most glaring light, had never gained an interest from Madeline. She asked for relief rather than brilliance, and preferred depth to glitter. Hence the grave harmony and deep currents of Philip Clarges'

noble nature had for her a powerful attraction, she pondered on his words and caught herself analyzing his sentences, often fancying she had detected a deeper meaning, than that on the surface, latent in these. Conscious that the code of fashionable life, which condemns as *mauvais ton* any earnestness in conversation, imposed a check on the native enthusiasm of Philip's character, she yet fancied that through the foam and sparkle of the waters of light talk, she could catch the gleam of the rich ore, and precious ingots of that rare eloquence into which at times she had heard him break ; and while she might regret that imperious law of fashion which can chain the natural flow of heart and soul in frozen fetters ; she yet acknowledged the correct taste which, shunning the appearance of display, avoided its own favourite topics to join in those of others.

But did it never occur to Madeline, that this analyzing of character, however innocent and even useful when employed on the heroes of history or romance, might not be quite so safe a study when the object was a living and present, nay, more, a handsome and gifted man? Smile as sceptics may, this did not at first cast its shadow on the careless current of her thoughts; for as in reading the story of those who have glided from innocence into guilt, we find that the cunning of the narrator has so caught every subtle shade of change, and so skilfully transferred it to his canvass, that as we read, we note not these portents of what is fast coming—see not the shadow darken on the page, till the night of turpitude has fairly gathered round; and breathing the tainted air of crime, we pause to question where the change was wrought, and have to

glance back on the record to find an answer. Somewhat thus, is that unconscious gliding of the woman's heart through all those changes that are the harbingers of love ; through the interest that passes into attraction, and the attraction that deepens to admiration, and the admiration that is developed into passion. Like the faint blush shed through the white rose, we know not where to catch the first dyes shed by love on the heart's stainless tablets.

Even thus a new existence has dawned on Madeline Clare ; and were she now to return by that woodland path at Matcombe, she would scarce note the fading of the rose, or the elder-flower's white beauty, while intently bending over the mystery, mirroring itself in the virgin waters of her heart.

That is a sweet season, when the love

spirit steals an entrance on the soul's enchanted world, and, lurking in some secret cave, betrays his presence but by mysterious music echoing through the haunted cavern, or by the rosy shadow of his wings on the cloudless stream gliding past its entrance.

There is, then, all that charmed mystery which, belonging to Love's earliest hour, we wish, yet fear to penetrate. The currents of life glide on clear and untroubled, while, as yet, they glass the rose, and the gold of the morning is on their tide. Then, every emotion in the inner reflects its own beauty on the outer world. Earth has a bloom, and ocean a purple ; we look on the heavens that store no cloud, and the wilderness is brightened by the rose. The breezes, as they pass us, make melody as of the lute and viol, and the very winds of heaven sing rejoicingly on our path.

And, truly, while this earliest season of love is the happiest, it is the mystery which makes the most of happiness. Perhaps it is the same with most things. The world of imagination, ever surpassing that of reality and anticipation, ending less often in fulfilment than in disappointment. We hope more than we obtain, yet the hope confers its own happiness. That golden butterfly, which hovers over the fair gardens of fancy, spreads its wings but in the sunshine, and feasts alone on flowers.

The love of a nature like Madeline's is usually sudden as lasting. It wears the stamp of predestination even as it does that of duration. It is safe, too, as it is high; for, at first, utterly of the soul, it is as utterly divorced from the senses; and the very heart that holds it, is as yet unconscious of its exist-

ence. Having no part in passion, it is safe from snare. Colouring the life with beauty, and lending to existence a charm, it still reveals itself but in signs and symbols. And the love that is thus spiritual, is, as well, a safe love. In its very unconsciousness, it has a panoply that will guard it from all snare, even were treachery to draw near it, clothed in the sweet witchery of man's rarest eloquence, with the silver tone and golden robe of poetry. Even had it come to Madeline in the magic words and rich music of Clarges' glowing language, it would have failed to lure her to one thoughtless deed; yet, would treachery from him have torn the veil from her heart's secret, and the same shock that bade her forego all hope in loving, would have revealed, too truly, that she loved.

It is ever thus with those whose love is

high as it is tender. We need not pause to speculate how seldom love comes in this shape. It is its least earthly form and has ever seemed to me unutterably lovely—and yet more sad than lovely. It is so pure, so high, and holy. It asks so little from earth, so much from heaven. How then, we may well ask, can it be happy. We have before this been taught that it is to the loftier and more spiritual part of our nature earth refuses nourishment, that the aspirations which catch the light of heaven on their wings, are those that hasten the swiftest to perish. Alas! such love is rarely happy. It graves but the one moral, and that most suited for the tomb.

Yet are there moments of unutterable bliss to such lofty natures as Madeline's—moments when the heart reposing on the present, asks nothing beyond it. It was now that

time to her. She had youth and youth's spirits—the one in its freshest bloom—the other unshaded by a single care. Hope and Trust walked like angels by her side. The stars of heaven and the flowers of earth, whispered sweet echoes of her own joy. The voice of Clarges made music in her ear, and his words dwelt in her heart's inmost cells. What could Madeline seek beyond this purple present, lit and perfumed by unconscious love. What ask but to list to the music of the glad waterfalls, and watch the curvings of the silver stream. But insensibly 'the one sweet hour, all love's own,' passed on, and the love of the dreaming soul was companioned by the love that makes appeal to emotions no less delicious, if indeed less holy. Insensibly Madeline learned to read the face of Clarges, and find happiness in the reading. To ques-

tion of his earnest eyes and lofty brow, and meet the fire of the one, and worship the thought on the other. To hang less upon the meaning than be wrapt in the melody of his words, in short, to love the palpable man, rather than the impalpable intellect.

And so as days stole on, the calm surface of her life was troubled. She more than suspected she loved Clarges. And fears and doubts came with the knowledge. No more wound the stream in careless curvings by the haunted cave, bearing on its surface, what seemed the tints of the summer rose. No longer dwelt Madeline in that enchanted revery, which hears strange music, and questions not its meaning. The mystery was disclosed, and the god leaving the cloistered cave had stood revealed, as Eros.

Yet in the first tumult of passionate feelings,

her beauty seemed to wax, if possible, more glorious, more dazzlingly radiant than before. The warmth and the flush of young and eager feelings—the exultation and the crimson of hope were on it. It had not yet grown tranquil in the sunshine of trust, nor darkened beneath the cloud of despair. Doubt shared the empire with hope, and their contending emotions while fevering the heart, shed a lustre on the external form. She trembled to think it possible she could love Clarges, who had never said he loved her. Had he ever even implied it?

Madeline would have given much to solve that question satisfactorily—yet how otherwise interpret the preference he evinced for her society—a preference which involved the interpretations she most desired. Still were not his words—his manner—so little those of a lover—at variance with this coveted inter-

pretation? Poor Madeline! how feverishly beat thy loving heart at this period in thy history! How anxiously it counted the moments of Clarges' absence, and sought confirmation of its eager hopes in his presence! How very a cheat it grew to its possessor, whispering that he was learning to love—that he loved her, when, if so, his outward demeanour bore no evidence to confirm its tale—the tale which whispered so much of hope.

“Men do not love as women,” she thought, “and he is some years older. The experience which those years, and the study of mankind have given, may well have taught him to guard his feelings from betrayal. In that, at least, he shall not outdo me,” she continued, as a blush kindled proudly on her cheek. “He shall not more jealously guard his secret, than I shall study to preserve mine; yet if, indeed,

his heart should contain no thought it could shun to reveal, how shall I bear the blame of having so hastily bestowed my love where it was not sought for. How foolish, how unworthy of me, this weakness is—surely—surely if it should prove so—if Clarges is, indeed, indifferent to me—it will cost me no pang to forget him ; or if it should, I will, at least, have strength to conceal it.”

So reasoned Madeline as days stole on, and the season wore to its decline. The garden fête spoken of at Brabant House, had been postponed by the death of one of the royal family. The brief Court mourning was now over—the next week was to witness the fête—and then Sir Charles spoke of going to Fawleigh, his country seat in —— shire.

CHAPTER IV.

THE MORNING VISIT.

How strange to look back on is that short sweet season when its first love dream dawned on some young and virgin heart!—how child-like are that heart's emotions, how differing from all gone before!—from all to come hereafter, so timid, so fearful, so superstitious is it in its very happiness. The pure bright stars of heaven shine on it for portents—the fair, sweet flowers of earth store for it their

emblems. It hears omens in the passing wind, sees them in the passing cloud, and too often creates the calamities it has prophesied. Charged, too, with melancholy, it seldom yields to any vision in which some thought of the dark destiny of human affections does not mingle; and it is not till skilled in the vanity and fleeting show of all earthly things, it has turned from earth to heaven, and, sanctifying the human love with the Divine, has shed around it the pure and beautiful light of religion, that it can taste the sweet solace of that calm serenity, religion's best gift to the disturbed heart and the restless spirits.

Never, I believe, does religion wear so alluring an aspect, as when we behold it for the first time after the strife of many worldly emotions—the fret and fever of contention—the tumult of applause—even the gentler dis-

turbance of passionate human affection ; presented to us in the simple aspect it wore to the early Christians, when—as yet virgin of the dust of the schools, untaken in the toils of philosophy—it shone in the undimmed lustre of its first and freshest purity. Seldom, indeed, do we now catch even a glimpse of that sweet religion which Christ taught, and his disciples believed. Perhaps, indeed, to its rarity may be attributed some of that surpassing beauty with which it comes, at fleeting intervals, shining through the loopholes in the thick walls of superstition, shedding unspeakable calm on the heart—making, in the beautiful words of holy writ, ‘the wilderness to blossom as the rose.’

But with Madeline the heart was left to become its own teacher ; and slow and painful is the process—and, perhaps, for that the

surer—by which, in such cases, is worked out ‘that peace which passeth human understanding.’ For in that process the world gives little help, and the creeds of the world as little ; and better for some minds, it may be, that they should slumber on in a careless and ignorant credulity, than be roused to enquiries, that, alas ! through the wide realm of our social system look in vain for an answer ; while not to every such enquirer, does ‘the trumpet speak with no uncertain sound.’ The mazes of superstition are many, and oftentimes do the shades of evening descend, ere the wanderer has found the clue.

What praise, then, is too great — what love too intense, that we should not bestow it on those few great, natural, noble hearts, that in an artificial age speak the words of truth and sobriety ? Some few such there are, and

the world does homage to the beauty of their souls, but it knows little of the truth that shines out from those sweet loving hearts, shedding light, and warmth, and gladness into a million other hearts of men hungering and thirsting after the same truth. Such teachers of the world are Charles Dickens, and William and Mary Howitt; such is Longfellow, with his 'Psalm of Life' and his 'Excelsior;' those noble life tunes ringing out their loud, clear voluntaries over two hemispheres—music that no true heart of humanity has ever heard without an echo of love and hope, and a blessing on him who made it.

And so to Madeline, Love had brought all its passionate unrest, its fevered hope, its pang, and its desire; and love to that high heart could be no sweet, simple Sophia Western affair—no innocent country maid's affection

for the dashing blade, who ends his career of profligacy with a few words of penitence, and receives as his reward permission to 'fix the day.'

I own to a *penchant* for Tom Jones. I am glad Sophia treated him so tenderly, the manly, kindly-natured fellow! It was only natural she should see no fault in him that it were not easy to excuse; and it is true woman's love—this tenderness and pardon; what man will not like Sophia the better for it? But nature had constituted both Philip Clarges and Madeline Clare very differently from Tom Jones and Sophia Western. The dreamy, lofty, ideal tendencies of the nineteenth century had refined their minds—its pure virtue dwelt in their hearts, and influenced their lives. The love Madeline gave was coloured by the poetry and enthusiasm, and sanctified by the

religion native in her character ; her devotion was ineffably pure and tender, but it asked the same pure and unstained fidelity in return. Madeline would have turned in disgust from a Tom Jones ; and so she loved—passionately loved—a Philip Clarges. And it is the nature of this love to be proud and reserved, to make no sign that may betray its existence. And so Philip vainly sought to discover if he had as yet awoke an interest in the heart of Madeline, while she could not penetrate the history of his youth, or discern that, without some sign from her, his heart would long hesitate ere it yielded, a second time, to emotions that, once so sweet, had yet proved so fatal. So his conversation, ever full of a certain winning eloquence, yet had begun to jar upon a heart now longing for something more sympathetic, and less ideal— something Madeline sought for

by which she might gauge his hidden feelings, and sound the depths of that proudly silent nature. Perhaps, in two elevated natures, this oftenest marks the difference between the masculine and feminine: the one has its home in the grand emotions of the soul; the other, in the simpler affections of the heart. And say what we will of eloquence, that eloquence is ever the sweetest which makes appeal to our vanity; so Madeline dwelt most on those moments of their intercourse, when she yielded to the fond belief that a deepened meaning pervaded the more serious language, or ran through the enforced badinage of Clarges' converse. When the heart has reached this stage, where belief is just trembling through the mists of uncertainty, it is prone to take refuge in a dreamy indulgence of its cherished wishes, to slumber on the present, and shrink from ques-

tioning the future. Sometimes watching those wrapped in this treacherous security, I have compared them to the voyager gliding over the broad and tranquil tide of that river whose currents swell the great Rapids of America, ignorant of whither tends the course of the swiftly lapsing waters, and waking too late to stem the silent force, that wearing the luring gloss that forbodes no fear—the dreamy calm that whispers not of danger—is yet with an irresistible and mighty power impelling him onwards to destruction.

“Madeline, I intend driving to Richmond. I must inquire for Lady Norton; but we will call *en passant* on Lady Charlotte Fortescue; I conclude you will be rural, and accompany me?”

“I think,” said Madeline, “your naming Richmond would ensure that.”

"Is it a dusty day? If so, we must have the chariot."

"Let me plead," said Madeline, "for the britska, and I will undertake there shall be no dust."

"I have my doubts," said Lady Caroline. "Madeline, remember you wear your crape bonnet, with the white feathers and peach-blossoms; I want to make Lady Charlotte frightfully jealous. She thinks no one can contrive a demi-toilette so well as she can, and I intend to convince her to the contrary; and put on that glacé I admired the other day; and I think a shawl becomes you."

"Only, it is so heavy," pleaded Madeline.

"A scarf, then; I can't bear you in anything, except a shawl or scarf."

"A scarf it shall be," answered Madeline.

"You are perfect," was her ladyship's sub-

sequent exclamation when Madeline appeared equipped for the drive ; and it is hardly too much to echo her ladyship's assertion. It is true that full dress is the test of beauty, but equally true that the morning costume is its heightener. The delicate flowers that rest on the dark or golden hair, like stars on the midnight of the one, or blossoms on the sunny flow of the other ; the cheek whose blush has the bloom and freshness of the morning, half shaded, yet enough revealed by the graceful veil and the encircling bonnet ; the light curve of the scarf, wooing and catching the passing breeze, or the soft folds of the shawl, draping the figure in classic majesty ; the brilliant hues of the silk, shifting opal-like with every movement ;—all these, with their more minute, yet indispensable accessories—the Cinderella-like shoe—the close fitting and delicately-

tinted glove, the snowy ruff, the lace sleeve—have a beauty, a delicacy, a grace, that every man, at least, can appreciate, however some women may neglect them. The conversation at Lady Charlotte's seemed to Madeline very much of the 'Shakspeare and musical-glasses' description. Miss Fortescue, with whom she conversed (if that be conversation which consists of a constant flow on one side, with a monosyllable, like a pebble thrown into the stream, from the other), was a young lady just 'come out,' and therefore conversant with all the topics of the day, as her mother was of all the matches past, present, or on the tapis.

"I wonder greatly," said Miss Fortescue, "you have not met her; she is quite the rage, and the heroine of all the novels written this season. Of course you know all about her first marriage—that handsome Count

Millefleurs, who was so much *affiché* with Lady Castle Lisle. What a relief it must have been when he died. They say he and Lady Castle Lisle are buried in the same tomb at Nice, and the Countess Millefleurs is, at last, quite happy. Then there was something so *romanesque* in Count Millefleurs dying of a broken heart."

Madeline repressed the burning words of defence that rose to her lips. She could have said that love, however erring, is well nigh redeemed by that sublime devotion which—consecrating a life to one passionately worshipped object—refuses to live when that object is withdrawn. She could, with all the scorn of a lofty mind and generous spirit, have rebuked the thoughtless desecration of love so utter, of sorrow so wild as his of whom a vain and worldly girl thus spoke. Her

thoughts wandered over all that most heart-touching story of deep, intense, but erring affection, and she felt as at last they rested on the tomb where repose that other 'Heloise and Abelard'—that beneath that last silent home of beauty, and love, and wit, and glorious gifts, and high patriotism, vanished all the memory of the sin, if, indeed, it had existed, while there remained but that sweet and tender recollection of love and fidelity, and the long regret, and the stricken heart.

And again Miss Fortescue babbled on, and again Madeline listened, when clear and distinct—she would have heard his name over a whirlwind—came to her ear Lady Charlotte's voice.

"To young Clarges. Most likely he doesn't care for the girl;—but you remember Lady Fortescue was always a manœuvrer, and they

are cousins, and so she has fastened Ellinor Fortescue on poor Clarges. I have not heard exactly when the match is to take place, but my authority is no less than Mrs. Clarges."

A mist came before Madeline's eyes, and sickness to her heart; yet she remembered where she was; she struggled for composure. She succeeded. Miss Fortescue's words flowed on, and Madeline answered, and answered correctly; but she felt the deep, hopeless despair that had come upon her; knew that that hour's darkness would lie heavily on all her future life; while through her poor stricken soul glanced the wild wish that she slept like the wounded heart she had been thinking of under cold marble, away from all earth's misery—oh, God! how enviable now appeared to Madeline that silent home, that united grave, that long quiet sleep.

At length the visit ended, and they went to Richmond. That dull and aching sorrow was at Madeline's heart that banished all sunshine from the day, and stripped the beautiful world of wood and water, of all its gladness, and its fragrance. That drive she had so admired on the day she had first met Clarges—that fair landscape smiled before her—her eyes met the calm curves of that river he had praised, winding softly on through the mild lowland landscape; she scarcely saw it now. And when she came to Richmond, reposing on its summer banks, 'the loveliest margin of England's loveliest river,' even Lady Caroline marvelled that no word of praise for the exquisite loveliness of that rich panorama of wood and mead, of grove and stream, of sweet and gorgeous pastoral beauty, fell from the lips of the pale and silent Madeline.

They reached home at last—and Madeline, hurrying up the stairs, heard not the message the servant strove to give her ; so when she reached the drawing-room door, and was about to ascend the next flight of stairs, she started, for her steps were arrested by a gentleman, who advanced from the room and greeted her on the lobby. It was Herbert Temple.

CHAPTER V.

THE TEMPTATION.

HERBERT TEMPLE'S life, since we were witness to his musings beneath the oaks of Mount Temple, has been one of constant acquirement. He has gained with wonderful quickness that knowledge of life which your wise, witty, worldly, wicked men think of such value. But perhaps if you were to search the wide world over, you could light on no greater self-deceiver than this same wise, worldly

gentleman. '*L'homme se pique*' might serve him for a motto; and the poor stag, who, guarding the land, was unexpectedly shot from the sea, for a crest. For to how many things does your sharper turn the blind eye—to truth, and beauty, and fidelity—to the poetry that exalts, and the religion that sanctifies life; to all its noble uses, its wise purposes; to all these, and to the blessed hope that brightens beyond the grave, he is pitifully blind. So Herbert 'l'emple could have put you in a good way to play that game which supposes your partners, equally with your opponents, ready to cheat—that game, where skill, and cunning, the quick eye, the subtle hand have so much to do—the fine principle, the noble aim, so little. He would have shown you, too, the true value of conventional deccencies of the 'social fictions

of our false humanity ;' from your respectable pharisee, he would have stripped the multiform wrappers of his comfortable disguises, and allowed you to see, how small the man was—how paltry, how insignificant he who made such a goodly show. Pointing to men and professions—to sects and persuasions—he would have said — “ Here are glorious materials — fine experiences for a tyro who desires to become a master hand—these, if he be skilful, are the handkerchiefs, and the bells, hung upon that hoary headed Jew, the world—and he, if he practice, may be the ‘artful dodger,’ who can take the handkerchiefs, without ringing the bells.”

And this miserable one-sided view of life he would have taken some pains to persuade you was the true one, and have despised you for not believing him.

Well, reader, I trust to a man of this stamp you can afford some pity, even though it be mingled with contempt. I trust that from the heights of a calmer, a purer philosophy, you can look down on this fair earth with charity, and love, and hope in your heart, and, looking up to the heaven above you, can bless God, who created and sent a Saviour to reconcile it unto Him.

Had Temple desired to meet Madeline at a lucky crisis, he could not have chosen one more so. In contrast to the indifference of Clarges, there rose before her the memory of Temple's former passionate, unrequited love—the friend of her childhood—of the early and happy days of her own dear home; all the past seemed now to smile on her from the face familiar to her early life; and her feelings, thus touched on those sensitive chords, partook

more of the tenderness and gratitude, that might fairly be hoped to ripen into something dearer than they had ever done before. We never prize so highly the affection we have once thought lightly of, as when that we have made too much of, has mocked us with neglect, and stabbed us by a preference for another. Herbert was asked to dinner, and it was not merely vanity which made him fancy that with an added grace Madeline's manners had, as well, an added tenderness. How brilliant she was that evening! that beautiful Madeline! how rich a carnation shone on the cheek—how lustrous a light from the eye—how the lips, mocking at the heart's misery, overflowed with the gaiety that seemed careless and unconstrained as a child's—and the light laughter, mingling with the sportive jest, poured round her an enchanted atmosphere of happiness and delusion.

CHAPTER VI.

BANE AND ANTIDOTE.

THE evening was over—and Madeline, left at last to solitude, sat down, and in the quiet of her chamber, for the first time, allowed her tears to flow. The room felt oppressive; she opened the window, and leaned out to breathe more freely. A mist had risen over the park, which the just rising moon turned to silver, over which the night breeze sent a wave-like motion. The stars shone calmly on the still of

midnight—a still only broken by the vague hum of the city. This was, at least, calm and rest, through which her tears might fall unheeded, and her heart allow its wretchedness some relief. She wept long—that helpless abandonment with which the heart yields itself to some overwhelming anguish. Suddenly she thought of the morrow ; how should she meet it ? She shuddered as she thought on a new day, and her sick heart shrank from the thought of encountering its light, its noise, its duties. She glanced hopelessly, helplessly around. A vial met her eyes ; even from that distance, by the lamplight, she discerned the label : it was but to drain that draught to escape all life, and its misery and endurance, its strife and weariness ; wild thoughts floated through her brain and stirred at her heart. She rose, and her hand grasped the bottle, and

again she sought the window. Even in our bitterest anguish, when all earth is darkened, and we dread the dawning day that calls us to engage in life; even then there is in early youth a something that shrinks from death the moment it draws near. Madeline's trembling hand for one moment refused its office, and the next a light broke in on her bewildered mind, a sense of her guilt woke within her, and all of natural religion, that was shrined in her heart, rose up and rebuked her. It needed but a moment of reflection like this to change despair to resignation. Her anguish found vent in prayer; and, as she sought forgiveness for thoughts so wild and criminal, a sense of God's love broke in upon her darkened heart; she thought not then of aught that dogmatists teach, nor of the forms they insist on; no veil spread before her to hide from her the sight of

a God, and a Father to whom she might fly for refuge. And the quiet moonbeams paused around the kneeling form of Madeline, as she committed her sorrow and her love into the hands of God ; and though her face was yet pale, there shone over its pallor the purifying influence of that sorrow that brings to the suffering heart its first earnest recognition of a religion higher, holier, and more sustaining than the merely natural religion, even of a nature as stainless—a spirit as gentle as that of Madeline Clare.

CHAPTER VII.

A STRUGGLE.

MADELINE had not, however, yet gained that deep sense of religion that alone can bestow resignation. The next few days were ones of sore trial—alone—in solitude—and resignation were a possible task that had these to accord with its meek and silent mood ; but in the midst of London life, its tide, its bustle, its gaities, where the lip had to dress itself in smiles, and the voice bear the semblance of mirth, where was there room for silence or

resignation? She strove to bear it all, but it jarred on the flagging spirits and the desolate heart. Few can bear such a struggle long; the spirits are fled, and the temper yields next, and well if with it yields not as well the mind. One consolation was before her, after the fête they were to go to Fawleigh—to the country—to quiet—where there were old woods, and branching cedars, and solitary walks, where she might lay her hand on her heart, and cry, ‘Peace, peace!’ to its fevered throbs.

To trace the growth of a reasonable and earnest religion in the soul is hardly the province of a novel, else would I seek to follow the process in the mind of Madeline, and show how in suffering and endurance were daily nurtured those convictions that, once received into the heart, rarely indeed forsake it—those convictions that are the truest poetry—that

even in our own day have lent their life-ennobling influence to him who sings the earnestness and reality of life, its purpose and its hope, in words of unrivalled beauty and power, bidding us remember that—

‘Not enjoyment and not sorrow
Are our destined end and way,
But to act that each to-morrow
See us farther than to-day.’

Let us then be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate,
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labour and to wait.’

Meanwhile, could Madeline have penetrated the heart of Philip Clarges, she would have seen that day by day her sweet gentleness, her innocent candour, her transparent purity had been twining round the lonely life; teaching the hopes that had surrendered themselves to languor and inaction, once again to spring

forward with the freshness renewed, and the energy of an earlier happier day restoring to existence its fragrance and delight. Could she have seen that even now the rosy star of love was trembling through the mists of that tried and solitary heart. Could she have known this, and read the tale of the past, how much suffering it had spared her! We have seen the depth and permanence of that first and fatal love of Philip—now again one face seemed like an angel's to smile over the depths of past suffering, and the future again wore the purple of hope. That face was Madeline's—purer, deeper, holier than his love for Mabel, seemed now this second growth of love for Madeline. Guarded against with vigilance, yielded to with caution, it yet had made an entrance in his heart. Distrustful as the past had rendered him, yet to

doubt that spiritual brow, that lofty mien, that open, artless candour, mixed with so much maidenly reserve, were madness, were sin. Once this conviction gained on him, resolution became one with it. Through all that reserve of a soul virgin of passion or desire, he felt that he had at length awoken some interest in her heart. Besides, was it to be expected that, yet in the prime and vigour of youth, he should sacrifice his future to a vain regret, and colour all life with the dark shade of the past? Even before meeting Madeline, he had felt, as the memory of Mabel 'waxed faint, and more faint, amid the world of dreams,' the pining for sympathy, the wish to love—to be beloved. It is ever thus—ever do the finest natures feel most keenly the insufficingness of self, the necessity of love—of something to worship—to reverence;

hence the eager friendship, and the ardent attachment; the lofty emotions that prey upon themselves; the dreaming heart that is for ever mortified at its own uncompanioned image: these look to another for sympathy and repose.

Brooding on ourselves, how different we seem from what we once desired, and yet desire to be; how we dispute with, how we misjudge ourselves; our best and purest actions seem to us so mean and pitiful, our noblest gifts so poor. And a false scheme of religion may encourage this, and teach us that to think thus degradingly of that nature, 'but a little lower than the angels,' is right and christian-like; and thus may tend to render habitual, fancies that are but sickly phantasms born from the morbid spirits and the desponding temper. So they now seemed to Philip Clarges. Thoughts like these had been with

him many times, in his lonely journeyings through deserts and on mountains; but the moment he felt the soft spell of this new love on his soul, the phantasms faded, the pure light of affection struck through the morbid shades of his solitary regrets, and they retreated from his heart—leaving it once more open to the fresh feelings and glowing hopes of youth. Hope had re-visited Philip Clarges, re-visited him in more than its former radiance, for the years that had passed had—their morbid repining apart—wrought a salutary influence on Philip. All that had been rash and undisciplined in his youth, had mellowed beneath the touch of experience. Repose and richness had been added to generosity and ardour; and though the soil of youth that yields this harvest must be in itself fertile, still we may not regret the passing of the first years of even

such a youth ; we value the seed time, for we look to the ripening grain, and while rejoicing in the promise, our thoughts rest most on the hereafter that is to bring its fulfilment.

Philip Clarges was now, then, twenty-eight, that period of life, so rich, so eloquent in the bloom of all that a few years earlier was in the green ear of promise. And to him, now that happiness had rolled back its golden tides on his life—that life was full and fertile, as it is rare to see it. The mellow tinting—the rich crimson that the autumn sunset sheds over the glowing vintage and the ripening corn, most imaged his nature, rejoicing in the purple light of his glorious youth. Imagination once more walked, as of old, by his side, and Fancy settled, like the butterfly, on the flowers of life. Could Madeline Clare have but read this, would she, think you, have welcomed Herbert

Temple so gladly, or allowed her thoughts to turn for consolation, to the recollection of his early devotion. It was, after all, but a poor consolation, still it was her only human one, and she yielded to it. Could she have known the hopes it strengthened in Temple's breast, she would never have sought that consolation. To Temple, Madeline was now an object of greater interest than ever, while calculation lent its aid to passion. Not only had that beauty, which formerly so stirred his passions, waxed more glorious, but her prospects shone with added lustre. She now stood in the position of Sir Charles Clare's—the childless Sir Charles Clare's—favourite niece; and, while if her father survived he would inherit the baronetage, it seemed not improbable that the beautiful Madeline might even come before her father in the inheritance of Sir Charles's per-

sonal property. In any case, a game that had peculiar attractions, lay before him. A genius compounded of the qualities of the dramatist and the gambler, which loved to view life as a stage or a billiard table, had here a fine field on which to exercise its powers. Passion and ambition joined to a reasonable chance of success, united their strength to urge him to the game. So matters stood on the night of Lady Brabant's long-expected fête.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE GARDEN FETE.

THAT garden fête!—from all the fêtes of the season, it, the last, stood out the fairest, and through many future months lingered in the memory of those who shared in it. That breathless summer night glowed with the lustre of coloured lamps, gleaming from the white and red rose bowers. Festal arcades were filled with noonday radiance, and mossy cave and hollowed grotto, stored with symbols

of the old Pagan worship, mellowed by the soft radiance that stole 'i' the midst of alabaster lamps.' There was the 'Temple of Roses,' where the soft amber globes swung in the marble pavilion, and their golden lustre shone over the fragrant flowers whence it took its name; 'The pale and the purple rose, sweet guests, were bidden' to their marble home, where the white queen held sway, with the crimson, and crystal waters glassing the flower, made the air murmurous with music. There the shadowy cypress grove rose darkly amidst a luminous haze of silvery light; here sprang up, the growth of a night, the fairy arch and the fairy bower. The old cedars flung light and shadow from their dark boughs, besprent with glittering stars; from trunk to trunk the trees took up the story, and the ivy-bound ash, and the wreathed

lime, the odorous sycamore, and the glistening laurel, stood forth in pale astonishment, and questioned of the night, why their repose was thus invaded. There, too, stood the old, many-turretted building, gorgeous as a birth-night beauty wearing all her gems—bright with its coloured lamps, mingling the richness of the ruby and the softer topaz with the emerald leaves and white cups of the jasmine, that spread in unchecked luxuriance round the casements, entwining its ivory trumpets with those yellow ones of the woodbine. Unequal as yet was the distribution of the guests, for here were buzzing walks, and there cool retreats, as yet scarce invaded, where the falling spray of fountains freshened the air, and their ‘scattered silver’ glassed the chance red or amethyst of the ruby or purple-tinted flame.

“How like a fairy tale!” said Madeline—and, for a while, transport beguiled her of pain; but she started, for the voice of Clarges sounded on her ear. He joined their party, and Madeline walked on in silence, and, despite her efforts to control them, emotions of pleasure stole on her as she accepted his proffered arm, and suffered her cares to rest awhile in that trance that refuses to believe in suffering, though the next moment may awaken it to redoubled anguish. They wandered on, and more than once Clarges gazed on the lovely face that declined by his side, while strangely delicious emotions played at his heart, and chained his lips. It was that beautiful moment—to which, perhaps, more than all others, we revert long after it has past—when the currents of romance and desire unite in the tide of love. ‘The one sweet

moment all love's own,' whose spell falls only on the clear and spotless nature, enchanting the entire being, enlisting soul and sense in its service. He was silent, for words could but profane that rapturous pause, that love-lit reverie ; while she, that beautiful and gentle Madeline, lingered in the spell of his presence, and yielded to the dream that colours life with poetry.

They had reached a little bridge, arching the picturesque stream, that wound its way through the grounds of Brabant House. As they stepped on it, the signal sounded for the fireworks, and the crowd rushed on—the next moment, and high into the air, leaped the rockets, breaking into purple and violet balls ; then this scattered host of jewels melted on the night, and rosy stars, and those colourless with excess of light, were followed by the

rush of Catherine wheels, and fountains of liquid fire, while flaming serpents meandered forth in mazes beautiful and innoxious. In the eager rush of the fashionable mob, Madeline and Philip were separated from Lady Caroline, who had passed on. The bridge grew still more crowded, and Clarges, seeing Madeline tremble, drew back and led her down an unilluminated walk—a walk where all was quiet, as though no festival had called its brilliant crowds together—the hush and calm of night slept on the odorous flowers; the perfume of the white rose trees stole softly on the silent air, and they brushed their leaves from the blossoms as they passed along. This path, after winding narrowly amidst the shrubs on either side, shelved suddenly to the banks of the lake. Here Clarges paused. Faint and broken from the distance, the sound

of voices and the notes of music reached the ear ; through the shadowy night the white roses glimmered faintly, till, at intervals, a red and scattered light wandered through the air, and lit the white rose tree, and the tranquil lake, and the two silent figures on its marge.

A strange tremor fluttered over Madeline's heart—a mingled fear and anxious desire that Clarges should speak ; at length, his voice made music on the air—they were in almost total darkness, for the fireworks had paused, and the voices and music died around them—a slight rustle as the breeze quivered through the rose trees, or some startled bird stirred the slumber of the lake, alone broke the silence on which stole his voice in strange and startling words.

“ Madeline, one of those thousand trifles

which form the sum of mortal life has called us here to-night—and I—I dare at length to seize the chance I might have dreaded to compel ; for rarely does the destiny enforced prove aught but its own misery ; will it plead for me, then, and in anything mitigate my rashness, to urge the chance which bids me say, I love ?—I the stranger of a few short weeks ago. Madeline, for all I ask—that virgin heart—that glorious beauty—that pure high intellect, that are your portion, I can give but in return—a heart that on its tablets has graven no name but thine—a devotion pure and stainless ; and, Madeline, my love is worship—the worship of truth, of purity, of heaven in thee—that heart, too, which thus shrines thee as its idol, has known no thought it fears to bare to Heaven—no deed my life has chronicled to which it might not make

appeal before its Maker, and, if it blushed for some error, might not say, as well, there has been no crime, no fraud—nor guile, nor hurt to others. Of fortune, Madeline, and an honourable ancestry, I speak not—for love weighs not these. Now, dearest, speak—speak quickly, for the heart brooks no delay that waits an answer such as thine.”

She trembled—she strove for words—they came not, and her hand was clasped to her breast, while happiness dimmed her gaze, and choked her utterance. Then, the rush of many sweet emotions swept in overpowering force across her heart. She gazed speechlessly in his face—that look—that dimly seen, yet wildly passionate look—told all that he would know. Again the heavens were lit with crimson lustre—again the soft strains of music gushed liquidly melodious through the



tranquil air ; and these voices of the world without were but echoes to the rapturous and love-lit world within, where Hope shed its purple on the heart, and sang soothingly along the life-streams that had parted to the rising of the new-born Aphrodite.

CHAPTER IX.

THE MORNING'S DAWN.

AND Madeline carrying home, in her heart, the rarest and best phase of happiness—that sweet repose of the content and rest that succeed to suffering and suspense—sought not sleep ; but, sitting down by the window, looked out into the night with a strange secret perplexity—an inward questioning if this could, indeed, be true?—if she might again look forward to life with the blissful assurance

that the void in her heart was filled ; that now, not endurance, but happiness, would be her portion. It was a natural thought in a young heart, this springing towards—this glad welcome to happiness ; but we all need to learn the truth—a truth profound and spiritual, that life is oftener nobler and purer without happiness. I do not think His life, who was sent to be an example, was one of happiness. Did he ever wish that it should be, or ever lead others to look for, or expect, or seek after it ? His meet was to do his Father's will. Simple words—simple, yet how profound is the lesson they teach. Shall we ever learn to look on life thus ? To remember, that the attainment of virtue, of strength, of reason, in the service of our Father, is more than happiness. Happiness ! —it is a poor word at the best, though we

exalt it highly ; how little the first Christian disciples thought of it ; other words had a charm for them—other and nobler words, self-sacrifice, and pure devotion, and a ‘reasonable service,’ and then, let trials come, and persecutions, and death, they could rejoice in all, and think that all were gain. But it is not always, or even often, that the young heart can bring itself to prefer the performance of duty to the enjoyment of happiness, or to think that happiness is not always the purest element for the soul to live in ; nor can we forbid Madeline to rejoice that she has changed the one existence of sorrow and resignation, for the other more congenial one of Hope and Love.

Silently she watched the progress of the night—one of those short summer nights, that hold but partial darkness, and even that would soon pass into the dawn of another day.

The pale moon shone through the mist, that never quite deserts a summer night, softening the heavy shadow of the trees, and rising over the garden, and the plants in the balcony. As she watched, the vapours thinned, and the moon set behind a clump of poplars, pale and faint, like the pensive shadow of a sorrow, taking leave of the heart it has long haunted ; while a bar of light streaked the east, and a cool breeze stealing over the park and gardens, stirred the trees, and freshened from the lake. The dew drops were glistening on grass and flower, and the soft flush on the cheek of morning, made every object beautiful ; the birds chirped merrily, the carol of a skylark broke over the park, and the sun rose royally into heaven, flinging a monarch's gifts to the scattered clouds, that caught the gold and crimson of the morning on their virgin white-

ness. Early bees and butterflies clustered round the flowers—a new day had come. And Madeline, as she welcomed it, thought it resembled her own existence, now again wearing its virgin coronal of fresh and innocent delight, and so, looking on the smiling face of nature, her heart reposed on its own content, and questioned of nothing beyond it. She had suffered too much—too acutely, to seek to analyze that happiness, or ask on what certainty it rested. Enough to believe that Clarges loved her, that even to question, would be to wrong him. Strong in her generous confidence and undoubting faith, now she allowed herself to feel how deeply she had loved that noble heart and gentle nature. And the sun was high in the heavens, and the trees full of golden light, when Madeline knelt in her chamber—not now trembling be-

fore the dim shape of despair—or asking the holy gift of patience, but pouring forth the voice of thanksgiving, in the spirit of that catholic prayer, which blesses God for our creation and preservation, for a life filled with blessings, and a world reconciled by a Saviour.

“Oh, God,” she prayed, “consecrate this love to thy service, may I treasure it as thy most precious gift. May it be a chain binding me to thy service. Teach me that love pure and holy and enduring, looks not to earth but to heaven for fulfilment. Take my thoughts and affections, Heavenly Father, from earth to heaven, that so I may associate all bliss in human love with the blessed hope of everlasting life, through Jesus Christ my Lord and Saviour.”

Was that prayer heard—so fervent in its aspiration for holiness—so devout in its trust

of heaven—so childlike in its confidence of God's mercy? Be sure it was. Though God's answers are often different from what we would have them, yet never did an aspiration for holiness—a heavenly thought—an earnest prayer, fail to reach his throne and bring back its answer.

And Philip. He too had seen the night go by — not in his room,—he was too happy for repose, and on leaving Lady Brabant's he took his way into the country. Passing along the suburban road that stretches from Brabant-house, he saw the last star fade from the sky, and the first streak of day break over the house tops. And when, street and suburb left behind, he stood amidst green fields, and green hedgerows, the crimson of morning was already tinging the clover in the meadows, and the wild rose in the hedge, catching fragrance

CHAPTER X.

SUMMER AND AUTUMN.

MADELINE did not now regret leaving London ; her stay there had been, first, a brilliant dream, then a bitter delirium—and she looked to Fawleigh more as a calm reality. It was a delicious season, that of their arrival at Fawleigh. The evenings had gained in splendour what they had lost in length ; and August, just declining on the lap of September, coloured the atmosphere with that lucid

purple which knows not mist or cloud. For Madeline the early autumn, rather the later summer, had ever a charm beyond that of other seasons. It is not youth that loves the spring so dearly—childhood loves it, and old age; but youth sees in it too many omens breathing of its own rapid flight—the first primrose on the leaf, scarce seen ere gone—the pale flowers, whose colours so rapidly give place to the warmer hues of summer; these speak of those first light hours of existence that so soon lose their gloss and tinting. But this is the tale of spring; and it was the decline of summer into autumn when Clarges and Madeline walked side by side through the woods of Fawleigh.

“How fair is this season! Madeline,” said Clarges, “when the morning mists hold such unequal contest with the sun, which soon

drives them, like discontented spirits, from the air—then the whole atmosphere grows clear as hope when merging into confidence, and the stilly air seems to make a pause, that we may catch more distinctly the notes of the lingering birds, or hear the whirr of the wild-fowl and the rush of the water-fowl among the reeds that margin the lake.”

“How lovely earth is!” said Madeline, “with all its varieties of light and colour; surely this skill and culture have half won back for us the Eden our first parents lost.”

“Oh! I once shocked a very orthodox old lady, when I was a boy, by saying I was certain the Garden of Eden was not one half so lovely as the prospect from the Round Tower at Windsor.”

“That was, perhaps, saying too much.”

“But, after all, Madeline, ought we to re-

gret that our existence is not that of Eden ?
For my part, I can feel glad that this earth,
instead of being an Eden, is one that requires
men to toil ere they can draw forth its hidden
beauties. Give me the raw material, and let
me work it into shape and beauty myself,
rather than have it done for me."

"I never felt so great delight in flowers,"
replied Madeline, "as when I had reared a
bed of pansies by my own labour. Do you re-
member a verse of Miss Landon's on the
violet?—

'I placed it in the summer shower,
I placed it in the sun,
And ever at the evening hour
My work seemed half undone.
The broad leaves spread—the small buds grew—
How slow they seemed to be !—
At last there came a tinge of blue,
'Twas worth the world to me.'

"Poor L. E. L.!" said Clarges—
"what a sweet, simple strain was hers!

We admire — we reverence — other verses, but we love what she has written in such artless profusion. But to continue our comparison, and from the material world to pass to the spiritual—is not the existence of trial and endurance, of struggle and difficulty, through which we may attain to the loftiest virtue, a nobler one than that Eden life of mere blissful innocence? On the whole, I am well pleased that Eve plucked the apple."

Madeline glanced up at him with a half shy, half amused smile.

"You are proud, then, of your own strength, Philip; but what would those who have no strength say?"

"Let them recline on the Eden slopes of indolent repose, or cultivate the mere gardens of life; but for me," he said, waxing more earnest as he gave expression to some of

his deepest thoughts, "never would I exchange for so unreflecting a happiness, the self-respect and the strength that arise from the consciousness of possessing those faculties which enable us to oppose heroism to danger, and to conquer evil with good. Never would I stand still at the vestibule of life, though it were an Eden decked with flowers and spotless in innocence. Through all obstacle and all danger, let me go firmly onward with a faith which recognises the infinite benevolence of the Creator of the evil that is needed to work out the highest good—the ultimate perfection of all His works."

He paused, for emotions came crowding too fast to coin themselves into words; and his cheek was glowing and his form dilated as he stood forth the young champion of the creed whose watchword is 'Excelsior.'

They walked on silently, thought in each waxing too deep for words ; while above them arched the calm and mellow sky, golden with the descending sun of August, and round them lay the purple hills, catching the crimson of the sunset on their wavy outline. And all nature told her thankful tale, rejoicing in the goodness of her Creator.

“Look, Madeline,” said Philip, breaking from that sweet reposing silence. “How beautiful is all around ! while the sun kisses that calm lake, and the crimson glory, fast fading from earth and sky, yet lingers on its placid tide. See how the very swans seem to share the rapture of the eventide, and pause, with stilly wings, on the unbroken crystal, as though they feared to invade that calm centre flood of the sun’s waning splendour.”

They were pausing by the margin of a

sheet of water, fringed with dipping trees and odorous reeds ; while on its surface lay the water-flowers, and the swans rested in the shade, leaving undisturbed the broad flood of amber light, that turned the centre of the lake to a deep golden red.

“ In my boyhood,” said Charges, and his voice was full of ineffable tenderness, “ I have pictured hours like this, and walks in the eventide by the glassy lake, when another ear might share with mine the sweet sounds of nature, and another’s thoughts worship with mine in the presence of God—one who, with me, would be content to watch the day descend, and the starlight arise beautiful, over the distant hills ; and how can I repay you, Madeline, who have realised—who are realising for me—this cherished and romantic dream.”

“ And you do not,” asked Madeline, while

her voice trembled and sank low, "you do not regret that you have chosen one, whose tastes and sympathies are most bound up with the country, and who loves better thus to watch the changing aspects of nature, than to share in the world's most brilliant scenes?"

"Nay," said Philip, "I have ever loved the country, and in one of its fairest spots, Madeline, lies hollowed Clarges—the home of my childhood—the home where she dwells who has tended my infancy, and been the friend of my youth—my mother—my dear mother—Madeline."

"And you have not seen her lately, Philip? I have detained you from her."

"Say, rather, dearest, you are the bond that once again unites us. For many years, till I met you, I had been a wanderer from home, and yet I once held a love for Clarges,

only excelled by that I bear to you, my own beloved Madeline—only equalled by that I bear to my mother—and both loves you have restored to him who blesses—who will ever bless thee for the faith and hope in life thou hast given back to his despairing heart.”

“I shall love your mother, Philip, as I do my own,” whispered Madeline.

“And you will love Clarges, Madeline—dear old Clarges, when you are its mistress?”

“That your mother must ever be, Philip; and yet she will call me her most favoured guest, will she not, Philip?”

“Yes,” he said; “yes;” and a slight cloud passed over his face; for one of those strange forebodings of calamity shot to his heart. He could not account for it; yet, it seemed to connect itself with his mother. He was silent for a moment, and then said, thoughtfully—

"Madeline, next week, for a short time, I must leave you—for a short time, dear Madeline—I must visit Clarges, and tell my mother of our engagement."

Madeline was silent, for now the thought of parting filled her with anxiety. Love is ever fearful of absence; for absence may bring change, and change is death to love.

"Must you, indeed, go, Philip?" she said at length. "But I am selfish to wish to stay you. Ah, Philip! those who have become slaves to one affection, can alone tell its thousand foolish fears and vague apprehensions. Even now, as you spoke of parting, methought a shadow fell on this fair landscape, even as one rested darkly on my heart."

"Nay, love, there must be no shade on that fond heart and fair brow while I am at your side. Keep these, if they must come for

my absence—absence which will be but brief ; but my mother, Madeline, she claims this from me ; it is her right, and you, who are ever the first to reverence and bow to the right, would urge me to go, were I myself to hesitate.”

“ True,” she said—“ true ; and a thousand times dearer is the love I bear you, that I see in you the ennobler of all my best feelings—the strengthener of my every weakness.”

While they lingered in this fond converse, the evening had declined, and the stars were rising and setting over the ridges of the distant hills. All sounds were fast fading from the air ; yet, at intervals, the ‘ swan stirred the reeds,’ rippling the water, or some bird or fish rustled midst the sedge and waterflags that lined its banks. They turned their steps towards the house just as the golden round of the moon showed over the tree tops, mellowing

the air with clear yellow light, flinging silver 'lustres' on the tranquil bosom of the water, and fetching odours from the herbs and sweet flowers nestling midst the grass and ferns. They stood still a moment to view the first radiance of the night wearing her 'crown of old magnificence,' as clear and distinct in the clear moonlight came out, the objects before lost to sight; and tall, steep, and dark yew-trees—the one silvered by the moonrays, the others rising dark against them—lent a pleasing wildness to the scene. There, the road bounding the park wound whitely away till lost in the quivering vapours that rose over the deep cornfields, out of which came the monotonous cry of the corn-crake. Round, in the distance, stood the purple hills in that soft summer light that lingers to the close of August.

“Look, dearest,” said Philip, “at those fair and glittering stars: such pure and tender light, Madeline, you have shed over my life; calling forth hopes as bright and rosy as that cluster of red and radiant gems, jewelling the sky of existence with fancies fair as they are. Even more than to the faultless grace of form and feature, Madeline, do I bow in homage to the rare intellect that breathes its ineffable charm through your soul, and animates that life to whose music all my coming existence will be set.”

And so rapturously Philip spoke—how differently from the man who, little more than a month before, had breathed a deep despondency in every sentence! Now happiness had come back to him, and hope made religion in his heart. And she, how happy, and how blessed she was in loving him! Long, long

was that night's memory treasured in her heart, then so blissful, when, in the pauses of their converse, the past with all its memories, and the future with its hopes, were alike unthought of, in that all-sufficient present that shed its peace around those pure and tender lovers.

CHAPTER XI.

SCHEME AND STRATAGEM.

AND, passing out of the present, they journey on ; but we turn aside to a far different scene. There was an eve in the August of the year marked whitely on the tablets of Philip's heart, when the sun was setting over the fair valley, and the home hollowed amid green hills of which he had spoken to Madeline. And there were two who, from the drawing-room window, viewed the lovely landscape

with that indifference to the changing aspects of nature customary in minds long habituated to the atmosphere of worldliness—these were Mrs. Clarges and her sister, now Lady Fortescue. Ten years have not made much change in either sister; for life to the one has been so calm—to the other, so full of intrigue; that each would start to think so much of existence has slipped by, in the calm, as in the intrigue; but so it was; for monotony that smooths, as well hurries the waters; while constant employment cannot pause to mark the lapse of time.

Lady Fortescue was now, like her sister, a widow. Sir Reginald had been gathered to his fathers some three years previously. Lady Fortescue has a comfortable, though not a splendid jointure. Ellinor's patrimony is inconsiderable, the estates having been entailed with the title.

“At last, Margaret, my plans seem likely to prosper—he comes next week, you say—Ellinor is here quite *apropos*. I think, after all, that was a most fortunate affair.”

“If a sort of exile for many years be fortunate, we may consider it so ; it has certainly prevented his settling at home.”

“*Tant mieux*, had he done so, her letter would have fallen into his hands.”

“If Philip, should ever discover, Gertrude, how we treated that letter.”

“He will wax ferocious, and then we must tame him.”

“Your plans often puzzle me, Gertrude, they seem to me so complex, so many things might at any time defeat them.”

“How pray?”

“If Philip, for instance, had married this girl.”

"He could not in that case have married Ellinor; but you forget I had a reserve in George Clarges."

"I do not perceive how he enters into the question."

"Only this far, that were Philip out of the way, he is the next heir male; do you think, that, knowing this, a nod of mine would not have brought him to Ellinor's feet?"

"You could not dream of acquainting him," said Mrs. Clarges, growing pale, and in hurried accents.

"Supposing Philip married, the thing is not only possible but probable," replied Lady Fortescue, as usual, keenly enjoying her sister's fears, as they who are possessed of the power and love of mischief can alone do.

"But your own reputation."

Lady Fortescue, laughed, a little short sarcastic laugh.

“ You, and Butler, would have to share the scrape between you, Margaret.”

“ You advised the whole,” said Mrs. Clarges, tremulously.

“ But did nothing,” answered Lady Fortescue ; “ and thoughts will hardly convict me ; however, you may calm yourself, Margaret, for, as matters stand at present, I am not anxious that, Ellinor should marry anyone but Philip. If Philip, on his coming here, refuse to accept the bride I have chosen for him, I will humble him to the dust before me — you do not know me yet, Margaret, nor dream of all the possession of this secret has been to me. When first, indeed, I plotted it, I had no ulterior object, beyond coming to your assistance, and the excitement of the plot

itself; but as this boy grew up, and with his scornful nature dared to defy me, I bore with him, because I knew that his fate was in my hands, while, from the moment of Ellinor's birth, a game opened before me—a game that I determined to play to the end. It has been something, Margaret, more than you can comprehend, to feel that Philip was all of my creation; and this fair heritage, a portion to enrich my child. Now listen, Margaret, my plan is all arranged. Philip must marry Ellinor. Circumstances must decide on how much of truth we shall reveal to him, listen for a few moments to what I purpose."

Mrs. Clarges bent earnestly forward, and the communication was about to pass from one sister to the other; when, the door was noiselessly opened, and Ellinor Fortescue, in the dawn of what promised to ripen into

exquisite womanly beauty, entered the room ; the golden rays of the sunset that entered at the window falling on her glossy curls, and lighting the faultless oval of a face, whose prevailing expression, was that of a pure and artless candour.

CHAPTER XII.

TEA AT THE VICARAGE.

TIME had dealt lovingly with Ellinor. As yet, she was a child. The butterfly fancy still closed its gold wings softly over the glowing flower of youth, which hope had painted with her gayest tints; and sheltered thus, life had glided gently on, knowing, as yet, nothing of the blasts that will come to scare the butterfly away, and bare the flower to the cold light of reality.

Retired with Lady Fortescue in the calm seclusion of her dower-house, and occupied with her flower-beds or her household pets, Ellinor had known no greater grief than the death of her gaudy macaw—no greater disappointment than the failure of her seedling pansies. The loss of the macaw, she, however, with heroic fortitude, contrived to survive, and even, in time, filled its vacant place with a pair of magnificos of lop-eared rabbits, which, in their turn, fell victims to Destiny, (Destiny, in this instance, assuming the humble guise of a cat's-paw), and plunged Ellinor a second time into the most heart-rending state of low spirits.

She then foreswore pets ; but tempted by a lamb, she took it under her protection, and was very happy, till one day, as she was petting it, she was knocked down, and for the

first time discovered that the lamb had become—a sheep.

Alarmed by this unforeseen, though not altogether unnatural *événement*, Ellinor henceforth cultivated tulips and balsams with amazing assiduity, and said she had grown too old for pets, wilfully forgetting that, in the last instance, it was the pet that had grown too old for her.

Meanwhile, Lady Fortescue contemplated with satisfaction her daughter's increasing loveliness. She had determined Ellinor should marry Philip Clarges, and, despite her own theory, she knew that he did not prefer a lively, popular girl, to a lovely and graceful woman. She remembered, too, his admiration of simplicity, and, therefore, allowed Ellinor to follow all her own innocent, natural tastes, without burdening her with tasks. She

contrived, however, that, without thinking it a task, Ellinor should learn how to play some simple airs, and sing a few songs not requiring any execution, as well as pick up some knowledge of French.

Thus had time glided on at Fortescue Court, varied by frequent visits to Clarges.

It was a pleasant and romantic change to Ellinor, those visits to the old house—for though Fortescue Court was a quaint and quiet residence, of ancient date, yet its grounds were but of small extent, and somewhat formal in their arrangement; and dearly did Ellinor love the broad, green lawns, and broad old cedars, of Clarges; its wide chambers and pictured galleries; its windows, rich with painted glass and proud escutcheon, telling their tale of the old line and the old blood.

She spent many a pleasant hour in the old-fashioned gardens on quiet, sunny days, when the peacock strutted haughtily by, and the shadows lay long on the dial-stone, and the murmur of waters stole on the calm of summer hours.

She saw the flowers bloom, and the fruit richen and ripen on the sunny south wall—saw the swans glide over the lake, and the blackbird start from the briar—and unconsciously the poetry, breathed from external nature, was stealing over her life, and rendering her susceptible to deeper feeling and emotion than she had yet experienced.

“You spend this evening at the Austens, I believe, Ellinor,” said Lady Fortescue.

“Yes; and I have come to consult you, mamma, about my dress.”

“The dress you have on will surely do for Mr. Austen and his sister!”

"This dress, mamma! I have worn it so often, that Miss Austen must think I have no other!"

"Do you expect to meet anyone this evening, Ellinor?"

"No—not anyone ;—at least ——"

"At least what?"

"I meant to say, not anyone except Mrs. Temple."

"And her son, I suppose!"

"Yes—I suppose so."

As Ellinor did not blush or hesitate, Lady Fortescue's incipient suspicion vanished.

"Of course, my love, a young gentleman makes a difference, so you may wear something a little less plain than that muslin," said Lady Fortescue, with great good humour. It was her cue to be indulgent to Ellinor, and as yet it had given her no trouble.

"Then I think my white barège, with the rose-coloured trimmings."

"I dare say it will do very well."

"And my hair."

"Perfectly plain; at your age I will permit neither flowers nor ornaments."

In half-an-hour Ellinor was equipped for her tea-drinking at Mr. Austen's. It was still light; so, putting on her garden bonnet and shawl, she proceeded, followed by one of the servants, on her way to the Austens' cottage.

"At what hour do you wish the carriage, ma'am," inquired the servant, as they reached Mr. Austen's gate.

"I shall not want the carriage to-night, James. Tell Mrs. Clarges that Mrs. Temple and Mr. Bertram will see me home—at least, to the gate—and will you be so kind as to meet me there at ten o'clock; I will not be much later."

And Ellinor, as the door opened, was warmly greeted by Miss Austen. Mr. Austen and his sister were very old-fashioned, primitive people. They were of very good family ; of this they were not proud, but its influence was shed over them, and, though homely, they were refined. Assuredly, every moral worth and excellence may flourish—and do flourish—among those who are not of gentle blood—who are of trader descent and trader pursuit ; but refinement seldom exists among them, though over-refinement often may. That over-refinement that is afraid to call things by their simple English names, and which is a very sure symptom of a coarseness of mind dressing itself in the ‘purple and fine linen’ of well-picked epithets.

“You are very welcome, my dear Miss Fortescue,” said Miss Austen (Miss Austen

did not call everyone she liked by their Christian name)—“and did you walk? you were right, this lovely evening; take off your bonnet and shawl in my room, or will you leave them here? Brother, here is Miss Fortescue.”

“Good evening, Miss Fortescue,” said Mr. Austen, shaking her hand cordially. “It is very kind of you to come to such quiet people, and, I fear, a little self-sacrificing.”

“No; I assure you it is a great pleasure.”

“I am glad to hear it; and this evening, you see we have company to meet you.”

Ellinor shook hands with Mrs. Temple, and bowed to Bertram with a formality that, in a less graceful being, would have been a little boarding-schoolish. The reader will learn presently how our old friends came to be in this neighbourhood.

Tea was soon on the table, with the accompaniments of toast, slim cake, and muffins.

"I hope you are growing attached to our neighbourhood, Mrs. Temple," said Mr. Austen.

"It has the great recommendations of cheapness and tranquillity," answered Mrs. Temple, who, by the way, looked ten years younger and brighter than when we last saw her. "We only left Hampton because we found it too expensive."

"We must try and make you in love with our village," said Mr. Austen. "I fear it is almost too tranquil for you, Mr. Temple."

"Not too tranquil; no, I love retirement in the country—and this is so beautiful. But I fear I am a thorough cockney, and like ever to be within reach of Hyde Park."

"Do you like town better than the country,

Mr. Temple?" asked Ellinor, blushing; it was difficult for her, as yet, to ask a question without doing so.

"No; I cannot, perhaps, say I do; but I like to be near town: you must not, Miss Fortescue, think that to be in the country you must be leagues from London. There are spots as fair and as rural at Roehampton and Putney, even at Brompton, as in Warwickshire or Yorkshire; while, if we go farther up the Thames, and land at Richmond or Twickenham, we are in a very nest of greenery: nowhere else can we find richer groves, more secluded lanes, or more luxuriant meadows."

"My native village is not far from the places you speak of," remarked Mr. Austen—a remark which elicited from his sister,—

"Brother, will you repeat those pretty lines you wrote years ago to Miss Fortescue?"

“I wrote a great many lines years ago,” said Mr. Austen, with a smile; “though, perhaps, you in your indulgence for everything I do, and I in my own foolish vanity, are the only two that would dream of calling them even pretty.”

“Only try,” said Bertram, “make appeal to us.”

“Do not tax my modesty too severely,” replied Mr. Austen,—and the slight colour which dyed his cheek, betrayed how he shrank from the request. But his sister persevered,—

“I mean the verses on your birth-place; I am certain Miss Fortescue will like them.”

“If Miss Fortescue would read them,” said Mr. Austen, with old-fashioned gallantry; “in the music to which they would then be set, I might hope to have the poverty of the words forgiven.”

“And here they are!” exclaimed Miss Austen, who had been rummaging in her desk, “and I am sure Miss Fortescue will kindly read them.”

“They were written many years ago, when I was very young,” said Mr. Austen, retreating into the shade, as he saw further opposition would seem like affectation.

Ellinor glanced at the paper Miss Austen had placed in her hand, and, seeing the writing was exceedingly legible, took courage and read the verses.

They had not, it must be owned, much merit, but they were free from affectation. They described a morning's walk, when the writer was in the first flush of youth; glancing to the morbid feelings of the period, when the boy is struggling into the man—that period,—

"When life spread its map before him,
And his earnest gaze was given
To the chart that might inform him
Of the wondrous world we live in."

His thoughts turned to the present to
show,—

"How as dreamy boyhood passes,
Pass the shadows from the skies ;
And experience of life's beauty,
Bids a brighter morn arise.

Duty points the path before him,—
Faith holds high her symbol cross ;
Young devotion bids him follow,
Nor to pause or count the loss.

Hills for enterprises' sealing,
Works of mercy to be done ;
Some pursuit and some achievement,
From the rise to set of sun.

These are now the thoughts that flushing
O'er the dawn of manhood's day,
Mellow with a golden splendour,
Over all his onward way.

And my soul with these o'erflowing,
On my way to-day I went ;
And my steps through pleasant channels,
To my village birthplace bent.

Here the dog-rose blushed enriching
All the hedgerow with its scent ;
Clove carnation, silver jasmine
In the cottage gardens blent.

And my gaze has sought the village,
Bowered in this blissful scene ;
Flowery meads along it lying,
With the gliding Thames between.

Quiet, peaceful, see it lying
Dimly through some sudden tears,
As there floats up in that gazing
All the tale of bygone years.

While I pause with sudden wonder,
Mingled with a strange delight ;
And a tenderness o'erflowing
As my birthplace meets my sight.

Safely borne through all the years
That have fled since I was born ;
Standing once again beside thee,
In the tranquil summer morn.

Oh ! thou pretty village, lying
By the Thames's silver streams ;
How this looking on thee bringeth
Back my life's forgotten dream."

More there was written in this simple, but

weak strain. But I need not inflict as much on the reader, as Ellinor did on her listeners.

"I like their simplicity and feeling," said Mrs. Temple.

"And I, the brave and hopeful tone," said Bertram.

"They are very pretty indeed," said Ellinor.

Mr. Austen stifled a sigh; and, as he came again more into the light, his face looked sadder than before. His was that gentle and timid character which, though it may possess warm and generous feelings, yet shrinks from asserting them, and is distrustful of its own ability to arrive at a true decision. Yielding to the advice and wishes of his parents, he had taken holy orders at a time his own feelings and bent of mind hardly suited him to enter a church as one of its ministers, with all the dogmas of which he was far from warmly

agreeing. As he advanced in years, his doubts did not diminish ; but he was still diffident of his own judgment, while there was so much in the services and formularies, and teaching of that church with which he could coincide. So he contented himself with evading any mention of the doctrines which seemed to him opposed to the true Gospel of Christ, and the best conceptions of God, and dwelt warmly on all those tenets in which he heartily believed. And thus years had glided on, and his life had been an useful and a happy one. Yet now, as those verses of his youth brought back the past before him, he caught a glimpse of a truth that saddened him. He felt that happy, and, as he had good reason to think, useful, as his clerical life had been, that yet he might have chosen a braver and nobler life ; a more reasonable and soul-satisfying service ;

if, having had the earnestness to work out the convictions of his inmost heart, he had openly avowed, and boldly professed them. Then, perchance, less smooth and tranquil would have been the flow of his life; yet, exceeding great would have been its reward in the strength and courage that fidelity to conviction would have wrought. Poor Mr. Austen! many like him have been seduced by the 'friendship of the world.' Many there are who think they have renounced that 'world,' who yet are its veriest slaves; for there is another world than the gay and glittering one of fashion, and he who sympathizes with it 'may get great credit to himself, and contemplate his own position with much contentment; but he will find by degrees that the world which flatters him, and which he flatters, is that very one whereof St. James spoke. So the prophets of

old found ; so the apostles found ; so the reformers found ; so it was in the days when our Lord walked on earth. All had to contend with the religious world of their day—He most of all. What were the Scribes and Pharisees but the most respected, and most exclusive portion of that world ?’

But so far from sympathizing with those who whine and lament, because they are looked on as aliens by the world of our own age, I see nothing but cause for gladness and rejoicing in those who go not with the many in the self-seeking, world-sympathizing path ; for to all there will come an hour when the world is gliding from them, and its lights are fading one by one ; and in that hour its maxims will sound coldly on the ear, and dearer then will be the memory of our separation from, of our protest against it, than all the opiates its praise and its flattery can bring around us.

"Mr. Temple, will you challenge Miss Fortescue to chess?" said Mr. Austen, by an effort dismissing the thoughts that had oppressed him.

"If Miss Fortescue will engage with so unskilled an opponent," replied Bertram.

The chessmen were then arranged for the game.

"And," said Miss Austen, "what do you say to a rubber of whist?"

"Three and Dummy," said Mr. Austen.

"Mrs. Temple, will you venture?"

Mrs. Temple assented, and the games proceeded amid sundry ejaculations.

"Brother, are you blind?—you must have seen all the clubs were out!"

"I did, but I concluded you would have trumped."

"Which you may see I have done; but

it has obliged me to throw away my knave."

"Check—no, you can't move your queen there, it exposes your king to my bishop."

"Mrs. Temple, you have revoked."

"I think I have forced you to change your plan."

"I don't think you can have seen through it."

"Pardon me, it depended on your bishops."

"Three by tricks, and honours divided."

"Checkmate."

"No, I can shelter with my knight."

"Now, then, the knight goes. Checkmate."

"No, thank you ; I will not risk another game ; you are much too skilful, Mr. Temple."

"Nay ; you did not put forth all your strength."

"Is Hampton Court worth seeing?" asked Ellinor, suddenly. She sometimes asked questions at random, when she felt silence embarrassing.

"That depends on different tastes. I have spent hours more than I could well count in its precincts. I dare say you would think it dull."

"Why should you think so?"

"Young ladies are usually so—gay."

"Frivolous, you would say."

"Perhaps so, but there is no rule without numerous exceptions. Have you been often in London?"

"I have never been there."

"How you will enjoy your first season!"

"I think I should enjoy the theatre," replied Ellinor. "Why do you laugh?"

"Because that is not generally considered

the chief attraction of a young lady's first season."

"No," replied Ellinor, blushing, and feeling very ignorant, and as if she had said something very much to be ashamed of; "I suppose I ought to have said I would enjoy a ball or a breakfast."

"Pardon me; if you suppose I think you ought to have said so, you are greatly mistaken."

"I was afraid I had said something you thought very stupid," said Ellinor; "but I think I should enjoy a play so much."

"I dare say *you* would," said Bertram; and Ellinor blushed again.

"We will say good night, now," said Mrs. Temple, rising.

"I promised Miss Fortescue that, as it lies in your way, you would escort her to Mrs.

Clarges' gate," observed Miss Austen; "and I believe she has not ordered the carriage."

It was a fine summer night. They walked slowly, and during the short distance between the Vicarage, and the Manor House, Bertram and Ellinor, managed to say a great deal. When they parted, Bertram observed to his mother—"What a nice child that is!"

Ellinor did not say to anyone—"What a nice boy, Bertram Temple was!" On the contrary, she would have felt rather indignant, had anyone made a remark to that effect; but she lay awake very long that night, and when she fell asleep, dreamed that she was at the theatre, where a very handsome man was making love to the red chess queen; and when he turned his full face to her, she saw it was Bertram Temple; whereupon she felt very indignant with the red chess queen, and was

stretching out her hand, with the intent to break her in two; when she found herself in a long gallery hung with pictures, and heard some one say, it was Hampton Court. And suddenly an arched door in the centre of the gallery opened, and a great crowd of persons came through it, and among them was one man, with a dark scowl on his face; who seized her by the hand, and dragged her through the door, when the ground opened, and she felt herself sinking down an immeasurable depth, and awoke just as with a shock she reached the bottom.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE OLD ROOF-TREE.

THE mellow light of a September eve was shed over the surrounding landscape, as Philip Clarges once more came within sight of home. Having got off the coach at the gate, he had left his luggage in charge of the gatekeeper, and then slowly wound up the avenue that led through scenery so familiar, and now again so dear. Before him lay a gentle slope of many acres, forming a park, which dated from the days of Elizabeth.

The formal avenues of oak, and lime, and horse-chestnut, were blended by distance, into a mass of rich woodland, from which rose, and seemed from afar to greet the wanderer, the tall chimneys of the Manor House.

Pausing a moment, Philip gazed back—where calm and fertile lay the smiling corn fields, and pastoral scenery of Clarges, rich with the richest hues of autumn, ere one sign of decay has touched the verdure of a second spring. The reapers were at work, and the song of birds was sweet at that tranquil hour, when all the softness of sunset and none of its glare tinged the glowing sky, and melted over the luxuriant and prosperous scene, through which wound the silent course of the stream—darkly beneath the dipping shade of trees—curving into golden rings where it caught the amber of the western sky.

He then pursued his way while a thousand sweet and tender emotions stirred in his heart and brought tears to his eye; and the pause, and softness, and delicious calm of the happiness that follows after long pain shed its soothing influence around him—the weight of years — their struggle — their cares — their weariness dropped away from him, he was young again, young as ten years before— young as when we saw him with dog and gun, returning by the little stream, or whispering his love vows in the ears of Mabel.

Soon what had seemed at the distance a thick mass of wood, broke away into its distinctive parts; the long and formal avenues stood out in the regularity of another era, opening exquisite vistas of the surrounding hills, or arching the amber sky like some rich cathedral window. As he drew nearer, the

woods receded from the house, and the wide green lawns and trim shrubberies came into sight. Solemn and hospitable looking—in the midst of the smooth velvet lawn and well-clipped hedge, and ilex-tree and hawthorn-tree, fashioned by the shears into many a dainty device,—stood the mansion of the days of Queen Anne, though, as we have said, the grounds were of an earlier date. Those old houses and older grounds have a great charm for me. I love those substantial, red-brick walls—those balustrated roofs—those doors with heavy porches—those windows with heavier copings—all that speaks of a time when people could afford to be hospitable, and had the heart to be so—when Christmas and New Year could be distinguished from other seasons—when friendship was something more than a name, and love than a fiction.

Then those parks and gardens—those groves and alleys—showing so much pains and exercise of fancy—those grand and stately gardens—fit for a palace—fit for a Queen. How glorious!—how majestic!—were those old French and Dutch gardens, with their pleached walks—their gilded balustrades—their sparkling fountains—their knolls and parterres—their trefoil and cinque foil—their water gods and syrens—their glorious reminiscences of Theobalds, and Nonsuch, and Hampton, and Hatfield—of Burleigh, and Sidney, and Surrey—of Elizabeth and James—of Tudor and of Stewart.

How quiet—how pleasant—now appeared to Philip the aspect of home—the fragrant breath of thyme and clover stole on the balmy air of eventide—the jasmine clustered over the garden wall, stretching sideways from the

mansion, and the honeysuckle mingled with the ivy clung round the wall and casements of the lower story. In one of these Philip caught the glimpse of a female figure, and his heart beat faster—his step went quicker. It was his mother; and once again he might greet her with the light heart and frank smile of former days.

And soon the board was spread, and with a heart glowing with happiness Philip sat down, with the old, half-forgotten feelings of his youth, all busy at his heart. He looked around and saw his mother—but little changed, he thought—for pleasure at seeing him again and happy had coloured Mrs. Clarges' pale cheek, and lit her countenance—his aunt, who, for once, seemed really glad at his return, and Ellinor, so fair, so pure, so beautiful, in her simple joy—these all gathered in the

same room—beneath the same roof—associate with all the joys of the child, the dreams of the youth. Oh! no wonder that his heart swelled to ecstasy—that his lips failed to frame the words expressive of that ecstasy! Ah! what joy is there after years of wandering, of separation, like this meeting once again beneath the old roof-tree, beside the old hearth-stone!

And now that first evening of such sweet happiness was over, and Philip was alone in his own room. His heart was full—and, as leaning on the window-frame, his eyes fell on the broad lands ripe for the harvest, overhung by the moon of the harvest—his thoughts went fast adown the silver stream of memory, while the sun of life went back, and hung just risen in the sky of youth. Again he read the fairy tale by the evening lamp, and wandered

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with Sinbad through the diamond valley ; again holding his mother's hand, he walked beside the stream, and wondered if the world ended where those trees rose dark in the distance against the red sky of even—the vision of the child had passed away, and the August sun was rising over the purple heather, and the gun sounded through the air, and his step bounded over hill and moorland, and he drank the first delicious draught from the cup of manhood. And then another scene rose clear and distinct from the past—the little parlour where he had sat by the side of Mabel, her passionate dark eyes met his, her simple yet thrilling accents sank on his soul. Oh ! that mad, mad love. He started, for its strength had not yet left him ; then the rush of many mingling feelings—the joy—the gratitude—the love of the present, meeting

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that old regret, swelled his heart to bursting ; he bowed his head on his hands, and wept in silence.

From those tears his thoughts rose fresh and elastic to a sense of his present bliss. Memory left him, and Hope stood now in her place. He thought of Madeline. Her high-souled love, her virgin heart, and sweet, lofty nature ; recalling her least words, he dwelt on all that held such sympathy in her, with his own desires ; those tastes and pursuits that matched with his, and promised to make his happiness—that future was indeed bright that would be shared with Madeline. With her he might re-nerve his energies, atone for time wasted, for gifts unemployed ; no longer lonely, she would aid him in every struggle, rejoice with him in victory, comfort him in loss : while all that would have been barren without

her aiding and sustaining presence, would take a charm from her—round the cold rocks and frozen peaks of ambition she would throw the purple of her own pure and holy nature, animate him to every conflict, sustain him in every trial. In his younger days, when drinking in the lore of history, there had ever been with him a hardly defined wish to apply the lessons of the past to the present hour. To him politics did not seem that mere game of parties that others, more indifferent, styled them. He had studied the history of human nature too closely to echo the idle assertion, that Whig and Tory had now become mere distinctions, without a difference; for, however shifting and shooting—like the lights in a silk—these contending factions might seem, he knew that their principles were immutable and changeless—as are vanity, or ambition, or

pride, or any other affection of human nature. That some men are as naturally imbued with a love of power, as others of liberty—some, as by an instinct, incline to the principle of the many for the few, as others to that of the few for the many ; and it had been a desire of Philip's, to array himself on his own chosen side—that of the people—in the struggle that was now agitating the country ; that struggle seemed now to have approached the eve of a determination—the scales evenly weighed, a little might turn the balance—and now restored to his country and to happiness ; with happiness rose up in the heart of Clarges an ardent desire to lend his might, his influence, the genius and energy he felt so strong, to the side with which his whole heart, and all the sympathies of his nature, went ardently and exultingly in its progress to the goal of a certain

ultimate victory, however impeded or delayed. But certain as the victory would be without his aid, it yet would be something to shorten the delay—to remove some, at least, of the impediments—to have helped and aided in the glorious struggle—to advance and share the sure and certain victory; and Madeline, how she would share with him in these hopes, and glory in seeing their favourite cause advance, and joy that he had helped it! Ah! now he felt all she would be that Mabel never could have been; now he knew that, while Mabel was the love of the boy, Madeline would be the companion of the man. The one, had she been all she seemed—mild, and innocent, and simple—could at best but have twined roses round the bowers of home; while Madeline would glory in placing the laurel of victory on his brow. But, as he thought thus, even while

his heart swelled to the ambitious desire, some sudden sadness crossed and checked the flow of those desires. He sighed—ah! that sigh betrayed much he would not own, for it told that to Philip Clarges, through all his dreams of glory, the Rose still seemed dearer than the Laurel.

He ceased from reverie, and now not alone his gaze, but his thoughts as well rested on the scene endeared to him by all early recollections.

Above him stretched the heavens, calm and light with stars—scarce a breath of air stirred the whitely drooping clematis, or the pale ivory of the jasmine, that hung over the window—the night profoundly still had the warmth of summer—the chance caw of some old rook, amidst the tree tops, the bark of some watchdog softened by distance, alone broke the re-

pose of the night, whose calm penetrated to his heart. As he gazed, his eyes again moistened, and kneeling down he thanked God that he was once more beneath the old roof-tree—happiness and it again as one—he blessed God for that dear heritage, and felt that every dweller on those lands had a claim and a tie on his soul, as though each were some old and loved friend. Their memory seemed to upbraid him with his long absence, and he asked now that the future might atone to them for the neglect of the past. And as he prayed and rose up, the future held many pictures before him, bright and glowing with love and peace. Happy Philip, who could look to that future with a heart dimmed by no remorse—darkened by no crime; still in his young and glorious prime—his beautiful and buoyant manhood. Happiness and Hope and the To Come, linked

in the golden chains of love, and basking in the heart's exulting promise.

Soundly sleep fell on him that night—
soundly and sweetly that first night at home,
where the man laid his head again on the pillow of the boy, and dreamed the dreams of the past, beneath the home of his childhood.

CHAPTER XIV.

SUSPENSE.

DAYS went on, and Philip vainly sought an opportunity of communicating his engagement to Mrs. Clarges. It seemed as though his mother evaded being left alone with him, while he could not fail to remark a change in her usually composed and languid manners. She seemed fevered and ill at ease; he often caught her looking at him, as though she would seek to penetrate what might be passing in his mind. But he could not brook

delay, when each day that passed was one more added to those unblessed by Madeline's presence, and at the end of his first week at home he succeeded in surprising his mother alone and unprovided with any excuse for delaying to hear him. Mrs. Clarges heard him calmly, yet, he thought, her calmness was assumed. He told her where he had met, and how he had loved, Madeline; but, before his mother's cold regard, his words lost their eloquence, the praises of Madeline's virtue and loveliness were frozen on his lips, and when he concluded, he felt he had said little to impress his mother with the extent of his passion.

Mrs. Clarges replied coldly; she dwelt on Philip's long absence abroad, on his alienation from home, on the mortification she now felt at the discovery that he had merely sought Clarges to communicate his engagement to

one whom she had never seen—of whom she knew nothing. She complained that Philip showed her so little filial love, and concluded by demanding, as her right, a period of two months to form an opinion on a matter too important for a more hasty decision, “while,” she said, “still more may I, as a mother, separated well-nigh ten years from her son, ask of that son that he will not, for the short period I demand, refuse to be my guest. There will yet be years before you, Philip, when your wife may reign at Clarges—when you will care little to visit your mother in whatever humble residence she may spend the remainder of her days.”

Skilfully she touched the right chords in that generous heart. Philip poured forth assurances that Clarges should ever be his mother’s home, that to her Madeline would be

more than a daughter. And, then, could he refuse to pass the time his mother asked at Clarges, while professing such duty for the future, could he refuse obedience for the present? No; he had no alternative: he could not wound his mother by refusing, after many years' absence, to spend two short months with her. He was no longer a boy, to fret and fume at every little delay; out of the sum of future bliss, what signified the loss of two months? To acquiesce was all that now remained; and that evening he wrote to Madeline, frankly relating the conversation of the morning, and its result. "One, dearest Madeline, that has cost me a severer pang than you can, perhaps, easily imagine, and for which I do not so much ask forgiveness, as claim approbation—that approbation you are wont to bestow on every un-

selfish act—for this the most self-denying action of my life.” Her answer came speedily. It is the only letter of Madeline’s that I shall ask the reader to peruse.

“ You have decided rightly, dearest Philip, and the poor praise that I can bestow is freely yours. Think, dear Philip, how it would pain me, to feel that the name of Madeline Clare was, in your mother’s thoughts, linked to her son’s only act of disobedience, and how that thought might colour all our after-relationship, till I was regarded less as the daughter who might share her love with you, than as the wife, who was eager to assert a rival claim on a heart once solely hers. Sacred and holy in my eyes are the cords that bind a son to his mother. Oh, be not mine the hands to weaken that sacred bond. Then, two months—how short to you will be the time,

which, comprising but eight little weeks, is devoted to the grateful task of filial duty;—trust me, it will fly swiftly—perchance so swiftly, as to teach you how little, after all, I could have aided its flight, while that dear home you love so well may hold too many sources of interest to leave a place in your thoughts for me. But do not speak, Philip, of my seeing others worthier;—does not that sentence imply a doubt; and, can *you*, then, doubt me? Can you think of me, and speak of change? Then you know me not. How wild—how strange the word seems to me. Ah, my beloved! your using it almost makes me fear that I have less claim on your heart than I would fain believe, and that you measure my feelings by your own, while they teach you to speak of change. Could you read my heart, you would see how wild a

dream you cherish ; for, Philip, I fear to speak of my love for you, lest it may be sin to hold affection so engrossing for aught but Heaven. Yet, I feel such love as mine, when pure, is religion, and looks ever to eternity as its home. I confess this is the feeling ever next my heart, till it has almost grown a superstition, that love like ours—like mine—is not destined to fruition on earth ; while, even should destiny forbid its continuance here, it has yet another home—that pure, heavenly home, where all vain and sinful desires perish. Since I have known that you loved me, my thoughts tend daily more to Heaven, and a voice whispers at my heart, that there alone is any sure joy—any certain happiness. What is this but the assurance of immortality shining brightly over every fear born of earth ? Earth holds so many. Absence, and change, and loss, all

that even a day may bring to pass. Now, I feel the beauty of that hopeful creed you first taught me, shining purely into my heart—that creed which teaches the abounding love of God, the immortality of good, the perishable nature of evil. This evening I visited the brake where we last stood. The sun was sinking over the silent waters, and the thrush's song was on the air, even as when last with you I heard it. My tears flowed fast. I know not why, a deep sadness stole upon my spirits; all things—the fading light—the thrush's parting notes—breathed of loss—all day the happy sunlight had lain over the lovely landscape, and now the night was coming on, and the mists creeping up. They stole over the scene, and dimmed the fair landscape. 'Were these omens?' I asked. And even while I asked, the yellow moon of

the harvest rose up, and changed the mists to gold. It seemed like the light of resignation, leading the thoughts to Heaven after the dream of happiness has vanished from the Earth. So, dearest, I feel that if denied future happiness Here, the soul has its home in the Hereafter. May God bless, and fit us, more and more, for that Heaven to which my thoughts daily turn, prays

“Your ever faithful,

“MADELINE.”

This letter breathed into Philip's heart something of the melancholy it betrayed in the writer. Never before had Madeline's love seemed to him to wear so high and chaste an aspect—never before had it seemed so unutterably precious. Every word of that letter, pervaded by such gentle, entire, un-

selfish devotion, yet so much of the tender, anxious fear of a loving heart, that even while it marvels how another can couple change with its own love, unconsciously betrays how it fears change in that other. Then, true to her woman's nature, when taught a genial creed, how full of religion,—every sentence eloquent of devotion and heavenly trust. Yet, he wished it had been less so. How natural to the human heart is that feeling which sees an omen in such deep and spiritual emotions!

CHAPTER XV.

SUNDAY AT CLARGES.

MEANWHILE, much of Philip's time was necessarily spent with Ellinor, and gradually he was learning to feel the charm that lay in her gentle and affectionate nature. There is something in a gentle and timid nature even more winning than in a high and lofty one ; the one makes captive the heart by its force, the other hovers round, and insensibly steals it away. Love for the one is usually more sudden and passionate—for the other, more

lasting and tender. And it was the fact, that Philip had even more of those qualities in his own nature that are attracted to this gentle, sweet-toned character, than of those which made response to a disposition more high wrought and noble.

So, in Mabel Churchil, it had been the wild and simple girl, whose disposition was the growth of such peculiar circumstances, that had, for him, so powerful an attraction. And though something of the passionate romance of youth had now left him, and that in Madeline he had learned to worship those elevated qualities that held sympathy with his own more ambitious dreams, we may question if this love had more real fervour than that first perished dream of his youth. Yet, reader, do not fancy that Philip was learning to love Ellinor. Had his heart not been pre-occu-

pieced, it is, indeed, possible, she might have found a place there; as it was, his feelings took the tender and affectionate shape of a brother's love. His only near cousin, and the recollections attached to her childhood, made Ellinor seem to Philip almost as a sister.

But only think for a moment on all he must have seemed to that cousin—all that a man of his age ever seems to a girl of hers, when that man is handsome, generous, and gifted. How easy, too, it was for love to steal an entrance into a heart so simple—so virgin of all knowledge of life—when day by day she shared his walks and listened to his converse, that held such claim for her unsophisticated mind. The very familiarity and absence of constraint, the result of their relationship—the solitude of those old woods and quiet autumn lanes—the

themes he touched on, glowing with so much of the heart's coinage—its poetry, its truth, its fidelity—how soon all these wore a dangerous charm for one so young and artless—how soon the glance she fixed on his features grew longer, yet was hurriedly withdrawn, when his eyes chanced to meet hers; while a quick confusion made her pulse beat fast, and crimsoned her cheek, as new and delicious emotions stole softly on her heart.

So passed on the quiet autumn days, and all was peace at Clarges, and chiefly fell its soothing influence on the troubled heart of Margaret Clarges. She gladly cheated herself into the belief that Philip had grown attached to Ellinor, and while Lady Fortescue exulted in the management that, without opposing, had delayed the accomplishment of Philip's wishes, Mrs. Clarges rejoiced to think that

once her sister's interests were so closely identified with her own, as they would be, should Philip wed his cousin, she need then fear nothing from that sister. And none could see into the proud heart of Margaret Clarges—to know how it beat at this prospect of emancipation, from the control Lady Fortescue had delighted in making her feel existed. For there was a dark and terrible secret shared but by three—one that the vain and selfish woman dreaded to dwell on, even to herself—one that her cold and calculating sister had long made the instrument of a hard and unrelenting tyranny.

It is Sunday—an air of quiet broods over Clarges—far and wide, the harvest has been reaped, and the melting sun of September glows over the golden landscape. It is cool and pleasant now in the old ivy-mantled church,

cast in the shade of trees, that catch the faintest breeze and send it through the open casements. It is a season of thankfulness, vegetation has been luxuriant, and a plenteous summer has been succeeded by a prosperous autumn. Well may they whose hopes rest so much on the weather—they who derive their chief support from the produce of garden and orchard, meet together in the holy edifice to return thanks for the plenteous season. Nor have farmers less cause to praise God, though it may be less inclination, for thankfulness usually flourishes in inverse proportion, to the blessings that are designed to call it forth. The prayers are over—the old familiar words that were repeated by their forefathers—the old beautiful words, the more beautiful, and the dearer because they are so familiar, have flowed from grateful hearts, that referred their

blessings to God, and thanked him not so much because it was 'Right, meet, and their bounden duty,' as because they were really thankful, and could not help it.

It had seemed strange to Philip—the first Sunday in the old village-church. So strange after ten year's absence, after such sorrow and change; that at first he felt confused, and thought it almost like a dream, for there everything was as he had last seen it—no change, no alteration there, the same fracture in the grey baptismal font, the same stain on the tablet inscribing the ten commandments. Then his heart overflowed with tender emotions, and his voice as it joined in 'The General Supplication,' went forth in low and faltering accents, while Memory recalled many a Sunday, in the gorgeous fanes of foreign lands—the cathedrals of Brussels and Florence and Milan—their

dim religious light—the glory of their stained windows—the air full of sweet odours—the sight gladdened with bright flowers—the rich music and chanted prayers, all that pomp of Roman ritual, that it alone can give effect to, though a church, whose claim to admiration has ever been considered to consist in the absense of parade—in a pure and simple dignity of form and expression,—now prefers to adopt a poor imitation of catholic splendour, provoking a smile of pity, as one recalls the fate of the jackdaw that stole the peacock's feathers. Now Philip, as he joined in the prayers, felt that no foreign ritual, no perfume or painting or music, had ever been so grateful to his heart, as was the service of the simple village-church. True, he knew that error was mingled with its beauty—that reason condemned many of its dogmas, and that the

growth of intellect refused to be confined within the limits it prescribed.

But there are times when we do not pause to reason, when a feeling or a sentiment holds more force over us than all that reason can suggest. I think it is well there are such times, though it is likewise well they should come but seldom. Sweetly in Philip's ears, that day, sounded the sermon suited for a village congregation. It was pure and scriptural. It reached to the hearts of many, for it preached the truths common to all—love to God and man—forgetfulness of self—imitation of Jesus of Nazareth—a life pure and holy—a death calm and resigned. These were the topics the preacher dwelt on. It was not a merely moral sermon, for it taught that there was a spiritual life—that life which dwelt in the Saviour of the world, and it

exhorted men to seek to have that life that was in *Him* dwelling in *them*. And there were some that day to whom the preacher's voice seemed touched with unusual solemnity—to whom his words conveyed a truth more forcibly than they had ever felt it before—who left the house of prayer convinced that there was a beauty, and a holiness, and a happiness in the life that dwelt in Jesus, and that without it, they could never be beautiful and holy in their lives, or calm and happy in their deaths. And now the congregation came pouring through the church door, and down the narrow path, that wound amid green grass and the resting-places of the dead. So many crowded round Philip to welcome him home, that he and Ellinor, who was leaning on him, were almost the last to reach the gate. As they gained it, Ellinor turned round.

“There is Mrs. Burnett,” she said, “at the door ; will you come back till I speak to her ?”

A lady came slowly down the pathway—graceful in figure, pure and faultless in feature, meek and resigned in expression. Sorrow had grown habitual to that pale and care-worn face ; but resignation had sanctified the sorrow, and there was something heavenly in the sad soft eyes that looked, in their deep serenity, as if earthly passion could no more trouble that chastened spirit. Yet, as those calm, tender eyes fell on Philip, some trouble came over the repose, then passed away, like those light summer clouds that melt across the else cloudless landscape.

“That was a suitable and beautiful sermon we heard to-day,” said Philip, as they walked on, and his words were addressed to Mrs. Burnett.

"We often hear such from Mr. Austen," rejoined his companion, and her voice was that low, sweet one that conveys an interest to the commonest phrase, though now the accent was yet lower and more tremulous than usual.

"It pleases me," said Philip, "to think that the walls of the church where my fathers have prayed, and where their dust reposes, are not made to resound to the presumptuous invectives of a self-sufficient controversialist, or the harsh judgments of an uncharitable doctrinal zeal."

"Presumption and uncharitableness have indeed little place in the gentle, unselfish nature of Mr. Austen," said Mrs. Burnett, a faint colour tinging her pale cheek; "he seeks to model his life in humble imitation of Him who went about to heal the broken

hearted, and preach deliverance to the captives."

"I believe Mr. Austen never married," said Ellinor. "I have often wondered that a man so affectionate and domestic should be so long a bachelor."

Mrs. Burnett did not reply; but Philip thought a sadder expression rested on her face, while her head was bent, and her eyes rested on the windings of the rustic pathway. They had now reached Mrs. Burnett's dwelling, a cottage on the edge of the village.

"Good morning, Mr. Clarges," said Mrs. Burnett, extending her hand; and, somehow, those gentle accents—that sweet, mournful voice, and sad, serene face, lingered long around him with a strange spell.

"Who is Mrs. Burnett?" he asked of Ellinor.

“A friend of the Austens, and of Mr. Butler’s,” she answered, “and, since I have known her, a great friend of mine; but, indeed, I do not know much of her; I met her one day with Miss Austen, and I thought there was something so interesting about her—so sad, and yet so sweet and hopeful.”

“And does my mother know her?”

“No; I am the only one she knows at Clarges. She is very quiet, and shuns society, since her husband’s death, I suppose.”

Here the conversation changed, and Ellinor commenced to dilate, with girlish animation, on the prospect of a dinner-party Mrs. Clarges was to give the following week, in Philip’s especial honour. But Philip’s thoughts wandered from the party to her they had just parted with, and he tried in vain to recal where, on some former occasion, he had seen

that face. Some memory there was, vague and confused, of pain and misery, coupled with a passing glimpse of that mild and beautiful countenance, when it too had worn a troubled and imploring look ; but, more than this he could not recal, and even this seemed a mere dream—too shadowy to be regarded as more than a fancy.

CHAPTER XVI.

FRIENDSHIP.

THE entertainment, that was irksome in prospect to Philip, was a source of innocent excitement to Ellinor ; and Philip was struck on the evening in question, as he had never been before, by the fresh and youthful loveliness of his cousin. The beautiful dawn of womanhood had now given richness to the slight form of Ellinor Fortescue, while the virgin crimson of young and eager emotions

rosied o'er her candid and expressive face. Within the last few days, too, that passion, little more than a fancy or a dream in the heart of one so young and simple, yet just enough coloured, by human emotions, to speak on the cheek and in the eyes, had shed that vivid lustre over the countenance which lends such witching eloquence to beauty, letting all the soul of woman breathe from her face.

Philip's attention was quickly drawn from Ellinor by the arrival of his mother's guests. When he again glanced to where she was sitting, he saw she was engaged in conversation with a youth, whose name he had not caught when introduced to him by Mrs. Clarges. Something, now, in that young man's appearance won the notice of Philip. It was not that his figure was graceful, and his face what might be called handsome, that

riveted Philip's attention, for men are not prone to admire these qualities in each other. Rather was it something singularly spirited in the turn of the head—singularly open and ingenuous in the sweet, yet manly, countenance, something cordial, and unaffected, and joyous in his air and manner, as he stood looking down, in animated converse with Ellinor, that fixed the regard of Philip.

It was remarkable that Philip Clarges, with all his own noble and affectionate qualities, had never contracted a strong friendship for one of his own sex. But the solution is at hand. First, he was endowed with those strong independent qualities that least need friendship and sympathy from other men, and, secondly, he had loved at the age when others contract friendship. But now a sudden impulse rose at his heart—an impulse that, put

into act and words, would have led him to cross over the room, and, extending his hand, have said, to Bertram Temple—‘Be my friend.’

However, Philip had not reached the age of twenty-eight without knowing that this would have been very startling to the nerves of those present, so he looked a second or two longer at that young pair, whose fresh and innocent youth, in its earliest gloss and verdure, seemed to render them predestinate to that inexorable destiny that so soon takes the gloss and verdure, the innocence and freshness, from the sunniest lives. Then, crossing over, he paid his compliments to Lady Maxwell Johnston, a Scotch baronet’s widow, lately come to the neighbourhood.

Dinner was now announced, and Philip, as he looked down the table, saw faces on either

side, but few of which he had ever seen before. Among them, however, was the well-known, but considerably altered, visage of Mr. Butler.

Nothing could have passed off better than the aforesaid dinner. It had no *prétension*, and a great deal of merit. It did not ape the style of May Fair or Belgravia, nor yet was it quite old-fashioned. There was a judicious keeping with the place. A dinner in a grave and ancient country house should not be altogether undistinguishable from one in May Fair or Belgravia.

Conversation at first kept under, broke out like a smothered fire, as appetite began to be satisfied. And here, we are of opinion, is the inferiority of provincial or country manners most apparent; for, with more eagerness, they have, as well, greater asperity and worse taste

than are to be met with in those formed by the habits of a town bred life.

“Don’t you think, Mr. Clarges,” asked Lady Johnston; “that the state of affairs at present, is very alarming?”

“I trust not,” said Philip, involuntarily glancing down the table.

“There is such a democratical spirit abroad,” continued her ladyship; “one really cannot sleep quietly in one’s bed, and I greatly fear—but one really must be cautious what is said before——.”

And Lady Johnston, sinking her voice to a whisper, glanced over her shoulder at the servant behind, who removed her plate at this fancied appeal.

“Dear me, I was not quite done,” she exclaimed; “but it is never safe to talk before——; we never know what their opinions

may be, and I am quite convinced they listen. But now confess you think things are coming to a crisis."

"To a favourable one, I am willing to hope."

"I hope so—I am sure I hope so; but only look at the Church, I hear they are putting up crosses and images, in all directions, and preaching in white gowns; but, to be sure, the English Church was always a little inclined to popery."

"It was admirably suited to the crisis for which it was framed," said Philip. "It cannot meet the wants of the age we live in, and so the signs of its decay are numerous."

"Dear me! I hope you don't take the Radical side, Mr. Clarges," simpered Miss Virginia Winter—an elderly young lady, rigidly evangelical.

“I am hardly more than a liberal Whig,” replied Philip ; “ and I own to certain aristocratic weaknesses ; I have a sympathy for the pride of ancestry. That seems to me a strangely constituted man, who cares not to know of —who holds no sympathy with his past, —whose heart does not beat emulous of their high deeds, as he gazes on the storied roll that tells how his forefathers fought at Cressy, and rode cheerfully to death at Agincourt, —who, when unrolling the gorgeous tapestry, that chronicles the age of chivalry, does not exult, to view in its solemn conclaves and great assemblies, the thoughtful brow and far-seeing eye of the wise and great of other days, without whom he could not have been—from whom he gathers noble thought and brave resolve, to transmit the legacy of their great fame, unspotted, to posterity.”

"Pray, Mr. Clarges, do you admire Miss Fanny Kemble?" inquired the pretty sentimental blue and bride, Mrs. Dovemore."

"Very much," said Philip; "and perhaps her heritage is the one we should most covet—the transmitted genius of a wondrously gifted race; for, where is there another family gifted as the Kembles?"

"Then, the profession of the stage is a sad one," sighed Miss Virginia Winter."

"You really must not say so," said Philip. "To me, it is as the 'salt of the earth,' the focus of poetry, the art above art."

"Ah, you look on it as it appears before the curtain; but go behind the scenes."

"And, Miss Winter, you will see a life—not gay, or glossy, or luxurious, nor of selfish ease and indolence,—you will see energies severely taxed, and nobly put forth—tempta-

tions met with, and bravely resisted,—you will find courtesy and kindness, and that readiness to proffer aid, which you will vainly look for among the clique that is readiest to decry and condemn the theatre.”

“And of course you are an admirer of Fanny Kemble’s poems?” said Mrs. Dovemore.

Philip replied in the affirmative.

“I am so glad you admire them,” said Mrs. Dovemore, “as I am thought to write like her; have you read my last volume?”

“Unfortunately I was so long abroad, that I have read little of English literature for some years.”

“It is called, ‘Lays of Lassitude and Languor,’” said Mrs. Dovemore; “my friends assure me it contains some of my happiest efforts—it is bound all *couleur de rose*, though indeed the contents breathe of little but the

blighted spirits and the broken heart—and with gilt edges, looks *so* pretty.”

When the ladies left the room, Philip found himself near to Bertram Temple.

“Have you resided long at Clarges, Mr. Temple?” asked Philip.

“Only this summer,” returned the youth, with that slight increase of colour, which betrays a nature still in its first freshness.

“What a beautiful country it is!” said Philip, in that simple earnest manner most congenial to him he addressed. “You must like it, if you are as attached to a fair landscape as I am.”

“I am, indeed,” said Bertram; “and the country round this is, as you say, beautiful—that lovely stream which runs by the village,—you sometimes walk there?”

“It was once,” said Philip, “my favourite

ramble, nor have I yet entirely relinquished my partiality—how many, and how various are the scenes on its banks, on a fair summer's eve—say in June or July, when the sun is setting engoldening the tide and the flowers on its surface, and the angler waits the favourable hour to pursue his sport.”

And once embarked on this conversation—how swift grew the interchange of their thoughts!—how fresh and clear and buoyant flowed from Bertram's lips, his sentiments on nature and books and character! While Philip, sharing in his companion's earnestness, coloured his language with that rich eloquence which has such charm for youth.

They talked long thus; and it was with reluctance that Bertram at length rose to repair to the drawing-room. For, perhaps, even the flush of love first reddening on the virgin

heart of youth has not so great a fascination as that stored in the first hour of friendship—that friendship only given to youth, and enthusiasm to feel in all its pure and tender charm. To none had that evening wrought such happiness as to Bertram Temple. Not only had Philip Clarges become to him the object of that beautiful hero-worship, which is at once the instinct and the necessity of youth; but, as he laid his head on his pillow, he owned to himself that he greatly admired Ellinor Fortescue. True, he had felt that before; but hitherto she had seemed little more than a lovely child; and when we are as young as Bertram, we are rather prone to admire those older than ourselves. But this evening, the new and warmer grace of womanhood had shone round her, and never before had she seemed in Bertram's eyes as she had

done that night. Still, that as yet his feelings had not gone beyond admiration, we may conjecture from the fact, that Philip Clarges occupied a much larger portion of his thoughts, than did Ellinor Fortescue.

When Bertram left the parlour, there only remained behind him, Mr. Butler and Philip. The latter had now leisure and opportunity to observe what changes time had worked in the object of his former dislike. The change was considerable. Our poor friend was not now the sleek and well-conditioned man we remember him. He had had more than one illness since we last saw him—the last an attack of paralysis, which though but slight, had yet told on the man. His intellect had not been impaired by the seizure, but the nerves had been shaken. All his faculties were as sharp and active as before, but a

little thing flurried him; and, when flurried, his hand trembled, and his voice shook. He was much thinner now, and the smooth face was ploughed up into many anxious lines. It was said, too, that he had taken a serious turn of late. Well, illness gives us all time for reflection; and when we feel ourselves in the 'sere and yellow leaf,' when the 'heaven and the earth' of hope and action, and young dream and young enterprize—and, for some, of scheme and intrigue and plot—have grown dim and passed away; what may we so well turn to as to religion, which tells us that 'though Heaven and earth pass away,' the words of its great Teacher shall 'never pass away?'

"How little altered everything here seems," said Philip; "I can hardly believe I have been so long an absentee."

“Do you think so?” replied Mr. Butler ;
“well, perhaps you are right ; yet things do
not seem to me—quite the same. It may be
that I am getting old, and—he ! he ! — that
makes a difference you know.”

The poor man’s laugh, was very sickly,
though meant to be pleasant.

“Why, you are a young man, still, Butler.
Dr. Channing, you know, said that sixty-three
was the happiest time of a man’s life ; and I
am beginning to be of opinion myself, that
happiness strengthens, the older we get.”

“Dr. Channing must have been a fortunate
man. It is not everyone that can say as
much ; and you do not speak from experi-
ence, Mr. Clarges—twenty-eight is very
young.”

“I shall be afraid of you in a few years,”
said Philip, laughing, “you are such an accu-

rate chronologer. When I have added ten years to my age, I hope your dates may be less precise."

Now there did not appear to Philip anything to startle his guest in this remark, and yet he could not be mistaken in thinking that Mr. Butler did very visibly start and redden, as he replied in a voice that shook considerably—

"It was but a guess, Mr. Clarges—but a guess, I assure you."

"Of course you ought to know," said Philip, not a little puzzled at Mr. Butler's confusion; "you were present at my birth, you know."

"True—true," stammered Mr. Butler; "of course, as you say, I ought to know; but I was thinking—that is, my mind was on another circumstance."

"It could hardly have been on a more important one," replied Philip, in the same tone of badinage.

"What do you mean?" inquired his companion, nervously.

"Merely," said Philip, with a smile, "that, of course, in everyone's estimation, his own birth is a very important event."

Mr. Butler forced a laugh, but seemed ill at ease, and fixed a searching and anxious gaze on Philip, who, changing the subject, said—

"By-the-bye, I was referred to you by Miss Fortescue for information concerning Mrs. Burnett."

As Mr. Butler did not immediately reply, Philip raised his eyes, which, out of consideration for the confusion of his guest, he had withdrawn, and was startled at the deadly pallor which had fallen on Mr. Butler's face.

“Are you ill?” asked Philip, pouring some wine into his guest’s glass. “You are not looking well—perhaps the heat of the room—you are near the fire.”

Mr. Butler drained the glass he had lifted tremulously to his lips.

“The fire overpowered me,” he said; “I am not so strong as formerly. I will join the ladies now, with your permission.”

And rising abruptly, Mr. Butler left the parlour.

“Can he suspect,” he soliloquised, as he mounted the stairs. “If I thought so, I would—— but it is impossible;—and yet what would I give that this weight were off my conscience!—it lay light enough once, but now it has begun to press.”

Yes—it had begun to press, as sin ever begins. Light sits its burden in the bright

day of youth and strength, and we mount the hill of life, the weight unfelt. Not till the summit is gained, and the point turned, and the drear, downward descent begun, do we feel how it presses, as our feet totter down the path whose next turning point will be to the grave.

“Poor man,” thought Philip—“he is greatly changed; he breaks apace. I no longer dislike him.”

CHAPTER XVII.

‘A YOUTH LIGHT HEARTED AND CONTENT.’

It was, perhaps, Bertram's misfortune that he derived happiness from external objects, as naturally as the bee extracts honey from the flowers. The same elements rarely combine for greatness and for happiness; and he who takes a ready and vivid delight in all that charms the sense and catches the fancy; the man who gathers pleasure from a flower almost equally as from a work of art; who owns a quick sympathy with the poet and the painter,

and the actor ; with all the earth presents to him of social and home delight ;—that man, clasping all these sources of innocent enjoyment to his heart, will most likely be a refined and contented man—genial and loveable ; but greatness is not for him, save that it be ‘ thrust upon him ; ’ and then I question if he very much prize it. Hence at Hampton—and more recently at Charges,—when spring and summer, and the richening autumn chased each other over the fertile country, Nature, in her varying aspects, had supplied Bertram with pleasure, perhaps, as exquisite as any of the more ambitious paths of life ; while the calm and glassy stream—the fragrant hawthorn hedge—the purpling sky of eve—that old and pictured palace—had each for him a charm difficult, indeed, to define, but known to every enthusiast of nature and romance. Then, for

variety, there had been the run up from Hampton to London, and the evenings at the theatres. Those bright and glowing evenings!—how rare and exquisite is the delight they yield to the ideal mind of youth! Which of us is there who does not look back wistfully to those hours that bore upon their current the eager emotions, the exhaustless fancies, the ennobling sentiments of the drama! For ever does the stage, through its masterpieces, make appeal to our least selfish—least material portion; and its sermons have a passion and a grandeur that it would be well if our preachers would take a lesson from. But, in truth, it is not from the black-coated and white-cravated men of the community that humanity learns the noblest lessons,—it is not they who oftenest make the cheek glow, and the pulse throb, and the heart swell or soften with the

lofty, or the earnest, or the touching music of grand or sweet emotions. While, from the stage, we may get 'a result of happiness, goodness, tenderness, pity, piety, such as, if my audience will think their reading and hearing over, doctors and divines but seldom have the fortune to inspire.'

And in such pursuits had glided on some quiet, peaceful months, and the colour had re-visited Mrs. Temple's cheek, and health and spirits, and almost youth had returned to her.

It was pleasant to see them together—that mother and son—as they walked through the quiet paths and river ways of that sunny Hampton ; and, pleasanter still, when evening—the mild summer evening—was closing round, and the breath of the honeysuckle and the white-rose stole forth on the wander-

ing breeze, cooled by the broad and winding river, and the waving Hampton woods—when the lamp was lit, and its light fell through the open windows on the garden in front of the cottage, and Bertram's voice was heard reading aloud some pleasant tale of Dickens'—some brilliant essay of Thackeray's.

But pleasant, though it was, and innocent, and, as far as it went, useful; yet, it was not the life to mould 'a youth light-hearted and content,' into a wise and earnest man. Trial can alone do this—trial that calls forth endurance, 'whose house is built upon a rock.' And that trial was already in store for Bertram. But, as yet, all is fair, and the wind is hushed, while over the summer stream of youth shine the twin stars, just risen, that colour all life with beauty and with sadness; and the light of one is friendship, and the

other waxes lustrous with the ruby light of love.

Lady Fortescue quickly divined the attraction Bertram was beginning to find in Ellinor's society; but she was without apprehension on that score, for she at the same time witnessed with an exultation that sufficed to banish every doubt and every fear, the growing intimacy between Philip and his cousin. She, nevertheless,—not abandoning that tact for which she was remarkable,—contrived an opportunity of engaging Bertram in conversation, during a morning visit. They were standing in the recess of a window overlooking the garden, when Philip and Ellinor passed beneath in deep converse.

“How much the friendship between you and my nephew, does credit to the heart of each, Mr. Temple!” she observed.

"It would be difficult to know Philip Clarges and not love him," he replied, earnestly.

"For you, perhaps, but not for most; yours is an envious sex, Mr. Temple; there are few men that do not envy the talent, the good fortune, or the good looks of others."

"I cannot agree with you, Lady Fortescue," said Bertram, warmly. "I have found many warm hearts, many generous minds even among my own few acquaintance; and there are doubtless many more in the world."

"But few like your friend Philip," said Lady Fortescue; "few to whom a mother could so safely entrust the happiness of a dear and only child."

She saw the poor lad start and grow pale; her cruel eye plumbed his heart, and discerned its bitterness. "Poor child," she continued, in a low, half-musing tone, "how thankful I

should be that she has met with a guardian in Philip ; as yet I have sufficed for her protection—but at her age, when the affections are so easily deceived, a mother suffers much anxiety—but that is past now, and I can contemplate Ellinor's future, as my nephew's wife, without a doubt or misgiving."

The arrow had shot home, but it had pierced a generous heart.

"May they be happy!" he said, fervently, as his eye fell on the figures in the garden beneath.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE SUNSHINE OVERCAST.

To Bertram Temple, passion, as yet, had been but 'the storm at sea, heard 'midst the green land's tranquillity.' Careless of what others hold in such regard—riches and fame; content while for him Romance yet preserved her charm, and Nature her winning aspect, and Affection her maternal guise; if he had thought of love, it was the love of fiction rather than of reality; wrapped in the contemplation of the passion as described by the poet and

applied to the hero, he had given it little reference to self.

And sooth, much as we exalt love into a divinity, it is a question if mortals, comparing the stage which has gone before with that which follows after, have any reason to congratulate themselves on the advent of that especial deity. Fair girl! whose eyes, now it may be cast on these pages, are full of love's deep and spiritual light, born, perchance, of thy last night's converse with that youthful cavalier, whose dark eyes poured eloquence beyond the gift of speech into thine—art happier now, fair girl? happier than before that meeting? Ah! the heart will answer yes; for in the new delight of love—to recal the words, the glance, the gesture, of him who has re-created life for thee—is indeed a happiness. A sweet delirium this! in the soul's mirror

to gaze on those manly features, that dark and waving hair, those eloquent eyes, that curving lip that smiled so sweetly, and gave utterance to such soft music—and now thou art, indeed, happy; for the flower's nectar, to the bee, is not so sweet as to thy soul these memories—and, oh—

‘Methinks might that sweet season last,
In which our first love-dream is past,
Ere doubts, and cares, and jealous pain
Are flaws in the heart's diamond chain,
We might forget to think on heaven,
And yet have that sweet sin forgiven.’

But how soon will that first delirium of love pass by! How short a time will be free from doubt, and suspense, and care! Perchance this very night; and those eyes, that last eve looked so passionately into thine, will gaze as fervently on another, and that superb butterfly will hover round many another

flower, taking pleasure from all; while thou wilt bear home with thee, the poor mortified heart, struggling vainly with its disappointment; and the sinking spirits, that will seek to bear themselves as bravely in the world's sight, as though all were not misery and desolation within.

And while it is true that men have less of this to encounter, it is equally true that they too have often looked back on the happy havens that sheltered them, ere they went forth to do battle with the world. For it is in the pauses of that contest that Love takes most the angel shape. When, midst the sterner forms that compass his daily life, toil, and strife, and ambition; or the darker spirits of fraud, and avarice, and violence. Then—when, with the radiance of a purer sphere, Love shines in upon the heart, and, detaching all

our better part from the cares of earth, we lay it an offering on that altar it has raised;—if that offering be, then, rejected, or cast upon the earth, henceforth our good has perished with it. Then are we all that material, out of which the world carves her favourites and her great men! Scornful of danger—sceptical of good—insensible to compassion. Hard, crafty, subtle, ‘earthly, sensual, devilish.’

Now, when a month has passed, look on Bertram. The dreams of his youth have perished—its idols are stripped of their gilding—his innocent delights have left him; and in their place have come the fevered dream of love—the bitter awakening to the truth. Ellinor loves another; her heart given to her cousin, what remains for Bertram? He is not one whom even an unhappy passion can deteriorate; it can render him wretched, but

not evil. Beneath that light and boyish exterior lie, unsuspected by any, those true and genuinely noble feelings that never obtain the world's approbation, for they flow so naturally and so genially from such a nature, that the sacrifices, which are their fruits, are supposed to be a mere following of inclination. For, as we do not recognise a clergyman without his badge, neither will we recognise virtue without her credentials. Unless she wear the orthodox garb, and walk in the prescribed pace, we will have none of her.

In Bertram's lofty estimate of Philip's qualities, it seemed but natural that Ellinor should love him. He did not even wonder at, much less did he blame her. Yet the struggle was a sore one—too hard and severe for a mind like his. To such a youth, and such a simple, boyish life, let any great struggle come—any

great misery, like this—and how impossible it is to fold the wings down on the home nest, and brood in quiet over the sorrow and the wrong. At such times rest is impossible. Nothing remains but flight—flight into the element of the untried. There, at least, are novelty and freedom, and the wings may beat on till fatigue lulls the anguish at the heart. There the crowd—the din—the hurry of a great city—a city like London; its fierce contention—its ever-changing tide of human life—can alone offer that on which the mental fever may fasten and spend itself. So it was with Bertram; and so, at the close of autumn, the cottage held no young bounding heart within its walls, and Bertram's voice no longer filled the sitting-room, reading from the page where great men inscribed their thoughts; and Mrs. Temple's face wore a

pensive sorrow, while the wooing air, that brought in the breath of flowers through the casement, and the broad moon, that rose with mellow light over the cottage garden, no longer stored either perfume or beauty for her.

CHAPTER XIX.

BETTER TIMES.

CALMLY went on the weeks of that glorious autumn, and the midway boundary was passed—that boundary whence two loving hearts might survey their past, and map out their future. There was a pause in the air—a stillness on the landscape—a hush over the surface of nature—that solemn silence that portends a change, causing us to feel that the year is now indeed on the wane. That period,

which wearing such sweet and solemn beauty to the young, has yet many a sad omen for the old, whose affections cling with unabated devotion to the world, though they may have seen life's most precious things descend to the grave before them. And I think this dread of death in the very old, this shrinking from the grave to which we would rather fancy they would look with longing, is owing chiefly to the very rigid notions so many hold of the requirements that fit us for the world beyond the grave. For there are many who think and teach, that a merely gentle, and amiable, and loving life is not a fit preparation for that Eternal Home, to which the hopes of all would fain point; and they have a hard technical way of quoting the language of the New Testament, as if it countenanced this harsh sentence—and so it has come to pass, that many

whose lives have been lovely and useful, are yet led to doubt their final acceptance with their Heavenly Father.

It has often been my desire and prayer that I could say something comforting to these gentle spirits—that I could lead them to think that nothing can be so meet a preparation for Heaven, as a life spent in doing good. So many are afraid that doing is not enough, without believing certain tenets, or without they find in themselves what is called a saving faith. These, instead of taking comfort from the sweet lore of the Gospel, and the mild precepts of Christ, try to narrow themselves into the hard tenets of Calvinism—that Calvinism, which, though it has been the instrument of much good, yet is too apt to ignore or despise all virtue and goodness, which do not spring from belief in its doctrines, and so

often disquiets and dispirits the loving hearts, that it has made afraid to dwell on the hereafter of the gentle warm-hearted ones they have laid in the grave. But every gentle and hopeful believer in those mild doctrines held in the Liturgy of our land, may take comfort in noting the milder and more tolerant and loving spirit that is slowly but surely leavening every form of religious opinion. How gradually the doctrines of Total depravity, and Election, and Everlasting punishments, are wearing out, and waning from among the thoughtful and excellent of all classes and creeds! While the mountain tops of gentler truths are here and there touched with the golden light that harbingers the coming day of charity and forbearance; that will yet soften and fuse all differences and shades of opinion into tender and harmonious agreement

with the great principles of Nature, revealed through Christ.

Reflections such as these had often mingled sweetly with Philip's dream of love. Without these thoughts, such affection as his for Madeline is ever fraught with apprehension. For, were death (and the thought of death is never far from any passionate human love) to withdraw Madeline from this earth, what hope—save that whose light shines from Heaven—would have remained for her desolate lover? As it was, their affection stretched beyond Time, and had its true hope in Eternity. It was now that quiet pausing place in Philip's life, when men seek, for a brief space, repose rather than action, and, from the past, strive to gather wisdom for the future.

It was the breathing time and the resting-stone in the race of his life.

We have all reached it one time or another. We have all known a pause and stillness, when the sun rested on the dial, and the wheel of life stood motionless, and we questioned of ourselves what, as yet, we had accomplished, and what task was still remaining. At such a time, the glades of life we look on are those our feet have long overstept. Over those rearward glades the Moonlight of Memory rises pale and clear. The rosy light of anticipation has for ever faded from those silent fields of the once passionate desire, the once vigorous action; and now the sadder ray of retrospection, brightens from many a grave where sleep for ever the unfulfilled hopes and dreams of youth. And it is to these pauses, to these resting-stones in life, that the world owes most of the feelings that take the shape of fiction. The passion that hurried us past

those sunny glades of youth, now takes the milder form of sentiment, and Sentiment and Memory, with the Genius to construct, are the three Slaves of the Lamp that wait but the bidding of the master-mind, to mould the materials of the past into the fiction whose life is with the future. For we rarely chronicle events as they occur; thus registered, they would lose all their charm, and be a barren catalogue of names and dates. We hurry past; and, when we look back, the Stars of Memory and Distance are shedding beauty on the landscape. The occurrence of to-day only becomes picturesque when it is to-morrow. The present ever seeks its interpreter in the future; it is itself the interpreter of the past. That past had graved its lessons on the heart of Philip. He looked back, and he saw—as which of us does not

see?—errors committed—time misspent ;—
but his were still the golden hours of a
gifted youth, in the flower of his age, and the
flush of genius. What a career might yet be
his—what an atonement he might yet offer !
The light heart beat higher, and the pulses
faster, as, from the vantage-ground of the pre-
sent, he looked boldly on to that future, where
the hopes and desires of so many ardent
minds expect fulfilment. After all, it is the
nobler creed—to grieve over the past availeth
little, without we present an indomitable front
to the future. Do we recognise the beauty of
strength and virtue? Let us take them to
our hearts, for we can do so. We have erred
—true, for error is the condition of humanity,
and wisdom is not born with us ; still, ‘lives
of great men all remind us, we can make our
lives sublime.’ Let us only dare to think we

can do right, and half the right is done. So thought—so reasoned Philip Clarges; and his was the philosophy, the denial of which has done its part well in rendering humanity that abject and degrading thing it delights to paint it. So had his thoughts borne him pleasantly on their tide to the eve that terminated the period of his probation. He knew his mother too well not to know that in her punctilious regard for her dignity and authority she would protract to the last the promised interview.

He was prepared, too, for the stately and measured accents in which, as Mrs. Clarges rose from the breakfast-table, she said—"In half-an-hour, Philip, you will find me in the library;" but something there was in his mother's countenance for which he was not prepared—something that, from the pale cheek

and troubled eye, spoke of emotions foreign to the usually composed and tranquil mien of Margaret Clarges.

CHAPTER XX.

THE DISCLOSURE.

It was with a hesitating step that—the half-hour elapsed—Philip approached the door of the library. A heavy velvet curtain hung across the entrance. As he raised his hand, to draw aside the curtain, a dark foreboding seized on his heart. He paused, and half framed a prayer, that now, on the eve of fulfilment, the cup of happiness might not be dashed, untasted, from his lips. Then, smiling at his fears, he lifted the curtain, and entered.

The library was a large and sombre room ; the wood was all dark oak, and the bookshelves framed, to imitate Gothic arches, while at the upper end an oriel window admitted the almost twilight of a November day, still more obscured by a large cedar-tree, that stretched its dark branches across the pane. A small and drizzling rain was falling slowly and monotonously, while the earth, overcharged with damp, emitted a misty vapour, that hung heavily over the landscape, and shrouded all, save the topmost boughs of the distant pine groves, which still retained their sombre foliage, and sullenly ridged the vapour, like the giant disasters that strike athwart the clouded atmosphere of a joyless life.

Nearer to the house stood, dimly out, clumps of the sycamore, whose pale yellow leaves dropped slowly from the branch—while the

red yet tinged the mulberry, and the withered brown hung stiffening on the beech.

Mrs. Clarges was seated near the window, and the pale light rendered her features more than ordinarily cold and statue-like.

"I will now hear you!" was her brief address.

He felt chilled; and the eager praises he would have uttered—the eloquent description he would have given of Madeline—died on his lips; and his answer was as brief and constrained.

"I have told you of my attachment—my engagement to Miss Clare."

"And you still"—and Mrs. Clarges fixed her eyes coldly on him—"you still persevere in your intention of marriage?"

"You surely did not fancy I could change in two months—that were being fickle beyond even the character attaching to our sex."

"Hear me, Philip," replied his mother; and her address surprised him, from its earnestness. "This marriage cannot and must not be; you have promised never to marry without my consent—and to this union I will never consent."

He did not reply for a moment—amazement checked his utterance—then his cheek flushed redly, and he answered—

"You are not serious in showing this disregard to feelings that claim some consideration. Could I think so, I —— but let suffice to say that it is somewhat too much, even of a mother, to ask me to forego my dearest hopes."

"Of marriage? I do not ask that;—but you have been now for some time in the constant society of one who, surely, you will admit, is as fair, as winning, as the girl you speak of."

"You surely do not mean my cousin?"

"Why not, Philip?—she is attached to you, and even owns as much. What more can you desire? You really must not allow a mere caprice to wound this sweet girl's feelings."

"A mere caprice!" exclaimed Philip—
"my love for Madeline a caprice! Mother—could you conceive the fervour of my attachment to one who is —— but you have not seen Madeline; and, to you, words were vain to describe that rare and radiant beauty—that purity and tenderness of ——"

"This is a mere boy's romance," interrupted Mrs. Clarges, "and I bid you listen to reason. You must marry Ellinor;—nay, I cannot explain all the necessity that exists for this match—only believe me, it is for your interest."

“Interest !” he responded. “Would, mother, I could convince you there are things above that interest you so reverence—names higher and holier—at whose mention interest sinks abased to its true proportions.”

He saw his mother’s eye flash darkly as he spoke.

“And even,” he continued, seeking to soothe her angry emotion—“even were I to comply with your wish, it could not benefit me. Madeline is as well born, as wealthy ——”

“It would benefit you,” interrupted Mrs. Clarges, eagerly catching at his softened tone; “do not ask me to explain anything; only tell me you will wed your cousin.”

“It is impossible,” answered Philip, in brief, stern accents,—“I cannot dishonour myself.”

“It is not impossible, Philip; there are reasons that will satisfy the world.”

"The world,—how you misunderstand me. It is of my own heart, and of her love I think, not of the world."

"Philip," cried Mrs. Clarges, in accents where pain and anger contended,—"if you could dream how much is at stake, you would not dare to speak thus."

"There is, indeed, much at stake," he answered, reproachfully, "that you, mother, seem to disregard; for if happiness and honor and self-respect are much, these are all involved in my decision."

"And more, and more," cried Mrs. Clarges, passionately. "More than these, there are wealth and station, and name, and home, and reputation."

"The last alone, seems to me of equal value," said Philip, calmly, though a vague apprehension had stolen on him, from his

mother's wild words and agitated mien,—“ but I cannot see what your words, hasty and misjudged, as I deem them, have to do with the matter we have been discussing. Let us now end this unhappy conference, but first——”

He paused a moment, and then said with softened accents, on which breathed all the depth of his regard for her he addressed,—

“ Mother, do not refuse me your forgiveness ; tell me you consent to my marriage.”

“ Never—I bid you marry your cousin, do you dare to refuse ?” asked his mother, in angry and defiant accents, that yet seemed to tremble with some unconfessed dread.

Philip's forbearance was by this exhausted ; a glow of indignation and resentment fired his spirit. Quick, fast came across his mind the remembrance of all he had so long borne in silent submission, from his mother's vanity,

and coldness, and caprice. The memory of years rose up against her, on that moment's pause; all she had exacted from him; the little she had given him in requital; the poor and feeble affection shown him; and now this last selfish opposition to his anxiously pleaded suit. His pulse throbbed, his heart beat fast, but he crushed down the tide of honest, though bitter feelings that swelled his heart to bursting, while he answered, proudly,—

“Then at least there remains the verdict of my own conscience to speak in my favour, and it has decided for me. I will return to town to-morrow, and there be united to Madeline.”

As he ended, he met his mother's look of rage, with a calm, though grieved regard. It was the first time he had thus openly braved her authority. She had not calculated on this

burst of spirit, and it maddened her weak, imperious temper.

"You will not dare," she exclaimed; "I claim the fulfilment of the promise you made me."

"It is broken," cried Philip, passionately. "Mother, I fling it to the winds; the promise won from the boy, must not be enforced to the misery of the man."

"Vain, headstrong fool," cried Mrs. Clarges; "pause, or you will goad me to utter that which will tame your mad presumption."

"I will listen no further," he replied, haughtily, and he moved to the door; but his mother sprang forward, and grasped his arm—that grasp trembled with passion. It is ever thus with those of a weak and sluggish temper; passion though it rarely visits them, borders on frenzy when it does come.

"You force me then to speak," she said, while a crimson spot burned feverishly on her cheek, and her voice sank low, and grew hoarse with passion. "Look there — look there,"—and she dragged him to the window ; "look out on those lands, of which you have often boasted that they had descended to you from a noble line of ancestry ; they are wide and fair to look on—are they not ?"

"I see," he exclaimed, echoing her excited burst with one sprung from purer feelings ; "and sooner than relinquish the hope of calling Madeline my wife, would I part with every acre of that soil, and every tree that waves above it—aye, and go forth as proud, as proud, mother, did she walk beside me, as ever went monarch to a throne, or conqueror to a triumph."

"Listen then," said Mrs. Clarges—and her

grasp tightened convulsively on his arm, while the crimson died from her cheek, and she gasped rather than spoke; "for it is even come to this: wed her—wed this Madeline, and all you see before you—lands, and home, and riches, the very name you bear, pass for ever from you. Mark me well, Philip, these are no idle threats; and then choose between Madeline Clare, and the foregoing all I have named."

And Philip looked on his mother's face to see if it evidenced any of the insanity—so he yet deemed it—of her speech. As he gazed, there broke upon his mind a sudden fearful suspicion. Tales that he had heard and read of crime and mystery thus revealed flashed upon his memory. He cast a hurried glance round the library, and, had every object there stamped themselves in shapes of fire on hi

brain, he could not so distinctly, years afterwards, have been able to recal the aspect everything wore in that glance, that yet seemed the mere distracted wandering of the sight: the day had then darkened, and more solemn and gloomy were the dark wood and the gothic arches, while some faces of goblin or satyr carved in the oak, grinned out from the tracery as though they mocked his agony; and, from their pedestals, the stony eyeballs of many an ancient stoic wore the icy regard of a relentless doom; beyond the vaulted window, the thick fog, and the falling leaf, and the slow motion of the pine tops met his eyes. When he spoke there was a drag in his voice and he articulated with difficulty.

“Mother, speak now; tell me all—sorrow is not unfamiliar to me: for ten years I have not learned in vain the lessons of endurance.”

He had spoken thus far—calmly it might appear, certainly slowly and with effort—when his voice took a sudden piercing tone ; the agony of his soul had forced itself through his speech—“ of all but shame—all but that. Mother, heap wrong, and sorrow, and trial on me, but spare me that ; it I cannot bear.” And Mrs. Clarges was still silent as she strove to frame some speech that might allay, without destroying, his suspicions, while that pause brought to Philip a confirmation of his wildest fear.

“ Who am I ?” he cried, with wild supplication in his voice. “ Speak, speak ; put an end to this mockery : tell me all—that you were not my father’s wife—that, that I—— ” And, reeling back, he staggered against the wall, while his hands pressed his forehead as though to steady his wavering intellect.

And now fear succeeded to *finesse*, when seeing the frenzy she had raised in Philip's soul, Mrs. Clarges remembered the import of her own hasty speech.

"I only jested," she said hastily, "and, Philip, you have mistaken; what strange fancy is this? your father's wife! could you have thought me not wedded to Mr. Clarges? Could you so wrong your mother?"

He did not answer. Slowly that death-like sickness passed from his heart, and that fever from his brain, but not so went fear and dark surmise. At length he spoke.

"There is some secret which I must know. I have been very blind not to have seen this before; now, tell me all—all."

"There is nothing to tell; I have no secret, indeed, Philip."

But all the power of thought had now

returned to Philip, and, standing before his mother, with pale cheek and commanding mien, he said firmly—

“Mother, by all that is sacred to us, let me now hear this mystery—for mystery there is—that has for years bound you in the power of others—of my aunt—of Mr. Butler. I must know why this is. I would hear it from you ; and it were your best wisdom, mother, to confide all to my honour ; for, refused explanation from you, I will force it from them. I did not mean to make you tremble ; have I been so unkind, so rebellious a son, to fear me thus ? For once, I do not intreat—I demand to be told all. My father’s wife can have no secret which it is not right his son should hear.

And it was one of those moments when, from the depths of one proud and command-

ing spirit, a spell is evoked which compels the weaker mind to obedience. That strange mesmeric influence was now on Mrs. Clarges. *Finésse*, stratagem, self-interest—all left her. She dared not resist Philip's voice and manner. She answered, imploringly—

“It is a sad, dark story, Philip; there is much I ought not to tell you, that it is best for you not to hear—at least, not now. Do not insist on hearing it now.”

But calmly and determinately he enforced his demand; and, at last, with averted face, while, through the vaulted window, poured coldly into the library the dim November twilight, revealing the shrinking figure of the mother, and the stern and suffering features of the son—the secret, hid for years, was wrung from the lips of Mrs. Clarges.

CHAPTER XXI.

MRS. CLARGES' STORY.

“ You know, Philip, that my father was not well descended, and owed his prosperity to his own exertions. I feel at this moment as if that were more to be proud of than titles or ancestry ; yet, in youth, I attached an inordinate value to these, for my mother belonged to an ancient French house. She was the daughter of a refugee, and never could forget the sacrifice she had made, in marrying an

English merchant. I own my sympathies went with my mother ; and my dream, from a child, was to wed a man of birth and position—one who could bring his bride to a home like this, where his ancestors had dwelt for centuries before him, and whose name was held in reverence through the county. As I grew up, the dream of the child became the passion of the girl. It was at its height when I was introduced to Mr. Clarges. I had the reputation of an heiress ; he had, it was rumoured, lost enormously at the gaming-table. I shut my eyes on the fact, that to my being able to repair these losses, I owed my attractions in his eyes—a portion of them, at least, for I was much admired as a girl.”

Here Mrs. Clarges turned her face to Philip, and he felt the force of the appeal ; that pale, beautiful face—that delicate and

graceful form—for how many errors might they offer!—nor offer in vain, their touching excuse. Mrs. Clarges saw the effect produced. She continued, with less effort:—
“ I had heard my aunt, with whom I was then staying at Bath, speak of the family of Clarges as one of old blood, and even royal descent. I had heard her, too, describe Clarges Manor—its stately mansion—its broad and fertile lands. Here, then, was all I had coveted offered for my acceptance; besides, Mr. Clarges was very handsome, Philip; though his habits had marked themselves on his features, he was still youthful, and of captivating address. I loved him as I had never loved any before—have never loved any since; and, dreading opposition to our union from my father, I was induced to consent to a private marriage. A portion of my fortune, left me

by a grandmother, was in my own hands ; it sufficed to discharge my husband's debts—those, at least, that were most pressing. He was then willing, I think, to reform ; and, in his case, I can believe that the reformed rake would have made the best husband."

Tears swelled in Mrs. Clarges's eyes as she spoke. Strange the influence of that first love ; thinking of it, she forgot all the dark emotion of the present, and only remembered the handsome face and sweet voice that had won her heart in days long gone by. Philip's heart, as he felt this, melted towards his mother, while he almost thought it selfishness that urged him to listen on.

"But his health began rapidly to give way, and he did not survive our marriage many months, dying at Nice, where we had gone for his health. Then, Philip, when my grief for

that loss had abated, I awoke to a sense of my true position. Should my child prove a girl, I would be left nearly destitute ; for my own fortune was spent, and my father, who died the month following my marriage, left his money to my sister. At this period, this was the one centre round which my thoughts revolved. It is true, that Mr. Clarges had executed his power of charging the estates with my jointure, little more than the interest of the money I had brought him ; but the position which, in a county where there were few titles, gave me an almost pre-eminent rank ; this, that had been the chief object of my ambition, would perish from me, should a stranger to me and mine take possession of the estates entailed on the next heir male. In my perplexity, I found a valuable aid in my sister, who, since my husband's death,

had joined me at Nice. You know Gertrude's character—how quick, how shrewd and fertile she is at expedients. She consoled me with hopes that my child would prove a boy, but urged me, at the same time, not to trust to an uncertainty. Then, looking round her for suitable instruments, and ever ready to discover such, she saw in Butler a likely accomplice. There were reasons, Philip, why this man should be disposed to abet any plan of ours, other than his friendship for my husband. To be brief, I was confined before my time; my child was a boy, but still-born. Would you know the rest?"

And, sick at heart—for the truth now flashed on him—he motioned Mrs. Clarges to proceed.

"Gertrude's plan had been, that a living infant should have been substituted for mine;

but this Butler strenuously opposed,—why, I could not then, nor ever since, conjecture ; but that matters not now. There was no alternative then, save to be guided by his discretion ; and under his direction, as soon as I had recovered sufficiently, we took our departure from the remote Italian town, to which, shortly before my confinement, we had removed, and journeyed slowly homewards, not, however, by any of the usual routes, but always making a circuitous and unfrequented *détour*, to avoid touching on any town frequented by English. It was in one of the most retired of the Italian villages, and just before entering France, that I was brought an infant, to all appearance nearly corresponding to the age of mine, had it lived ; and, at the same time, was shown an English paper, wherein was stated that, at Villa Mona, near

Nice, I had been delivered of a posthumous son ; while the date corresponded almost precisely with the age of the child now consigned to my charge, as, with the statement, Butler and Gertrude had agreed to make, of my infant's birth. It was thus, Philip, that the infant of another was substituted for, and grew up, believed by all to be mine ; and you, at least, should forgive the error that has made you the wealthy owner of Clarges, though you will now see the power Gertrude has of controlling your marriage, and the necessity that exists of our being guided by her will."

The corpse-like whiteness and rigidity had now again returned to Philip's features, and the silence of death reigned through that shadowy room as Mrs. Clarges' voice ceased.

"And what now remains?" he said, at length,

his very voice changed, life and vigour seeming pressed from it.

“Only marry Ellinor, and Gertrude will preserve our secret.”

“You mistake, madam,” he answered, in accents so deeply mournful, that they melted on the heart of her whom he addressed. “I am no fit bridegroom for Ellinor Fortescue. I shall never marry *now*.”

He turned to leave the room, saying, in faltering accents,—

“We will speak again—at least once again together, ere I leave this—now I must be alone.”

At these words, which she only sufficiently comprehended to dread he might reveal the story she had told, Mrs. Clarges again sprang forward.

“Promise you will not speak of what I have revealed to you,” she cried.

“Not at least till we have met again,” he answered; and she let go her hold, for she felt his anguish would not now brook restraint.

And silently he left the room which he had entered full of vigorous life and buoyant youth—bowed with misery, life wrung from his soul. All hope, all desire levelled to the dust. An existence without love or honour stretching darkly onwards, while the salt and bitter waves of shame, broke sullenly over the waste of youth, and strength, and happiness.

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CHAPTER XXII.

THE FAREWELL.

BUT there was one task before him, ere he might yield impotently to the shame that had met him in the full career of so much happiness. He thought of Madeline, but as of one between him and whom a gulf of separation wider than of years or distance yawned. It was no struggle to resign her, whom now to wed would be to deceive and degrade. Still he must write to say that all was passed be-

tween them—explain he could not—nor was there need, she would soon hear all; yet write he must, and now—at once. And he wrote, thus,—

“ Madeline,—You will not long seek an explanation of my cold address, too familiar for him who writes, to take of you an eternal farewell. We shall meet, Madeline, no more as lovers, on this side the grave, and if your heart can still reserve one tender thought for him who now addresses you, let it be, that to his grave he may soon journey, for on earth remains for him no more hope—nothing but the bitter cup of shame is stored for him, who when you last fondly looked on him, two short months ago, saw the future lit by that angel smile. Farewell, my pure-hearted love, whose spotless life will not long seek happiness in vain. I have not sinned against you, my love, for I

would have laid down life for you ; yet when you know all, you will feel with me, that the barrier which divides us, is indeed impassable—you, pure as angels are, gifted, beautiful—above the thought of shame or falsehood—and I—and I—pray for me, Madeline—pray for him who now bids you farewell for ever.”

And now that he had thus written, what remained? The letter gone, slowly and painfully, his thoughts turned on the mystery that clouded his existence, and the question rose, of who, and what he was — Sad, hopeless query, when he felt that every circumstance told against the possibility of his being of honourable, even of honest birth. His heart sank as he thought over the story he had heard — over the record of vanity, selfishness, and falsehood it had disclosed. Should he seek to penetrate the veil that still hung over his birth. Mrs.

Clarges seemed ignorant of it—should he then inquire of Butler?—and ineffable disgust and loathing came upon him at the thought. He buried his face in his hands, and strove to meditate—to reason; but there was a sick whirl at his head, and a dulness and weight on his heart, that numbed and paralyzed thought, and froze the very springs of consciousness. He had, after dispatching his letter to Madeline, sat, he knew not how long, in this stupor—hours, certainly, for the shades of evening had thickened in the room, when he was roused by a knock at his door. It was Mrs. Clarges, who entered.

Fear—the fear of betrayal, of detection, had driven her to seek him. And now she knelt before him—the proud woman who had sought to rule his very thoughts, knelt at his feet, and implored his forbearance, praying him

to preserve a secret on which her life depended. He saw the wild fear in her face, heard her agonized supplications for mercy and secrecy, and he was not what he had been a day before; strength and resolution seemed to have forsaken him — that young stout heart, that honest mind, those guides of his life, now had failed him. In this state he yielded—he spoke the promise she dictated, and again over the future of Margaret Clarges, shone the poor peace—the miserable enjoyment derived from such false security. While for him remained that miserable existence of shame and despondency, discrowned of all glory and ambition, of all hope of use or aim in enterprize.

That night, as he went to his room, the moon shone bright on the gallery, where hung the portraits of many former Lords of Clarges. And they all looked down on him—those pure

placid faces of the simple dead. And when he reached his chamber, the moonbeams shone in through the panes, and the familiar perfume of the jasmine scented the room, where as a boy he had slept 'the sound child sleeping which the thunder could not break.' And, reader, these may seem but trifles, yet pray that to you there may never come a night when the faces of the dead, and the moonbeams on the floor, and the perfume on the air shall be madness to the brain, and misery to the heart.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE SCENE SHIFTS.

It is time, now, we should inquire into the fate of Mabel Churchil and her father. They rested but a few hours at B——, where Churchil was joined by a friend, to whose care he consigned the horse and vehicle which had brought them so far on their journey. This man then took his leave, and Mabel saw no more of him. They next proceeded to Glasgow, travelling under feigned names, and by an unusual route. Here Churchil hired lodg-

ings in an obscure and densely-populated locality, still using a false name ; and, in answer to Mabel's anxious inquiries as to the cause for this secrecy, gave evasive and unsatisfactory replies, joined to the intelligence, that, after some time, they were to sail from that port for America.

As this communication passed Churchill's lips, Mabel shrank back in terror, and, seeing no other remedy, confided to her father the story of her meeting with Philip — of their frequent interviews, and of their mutual attachment—watching, with feverish anxiety, the effect her tale would have on her father. She was chilled by the scornful laugh which greeted the conclusion of her narration.

“Pshaw ! girl — did you think this was news to me ? Ha ! ha ! Did you think, child, that because I found it convenient to

hold my tongue about them, that I did not notice your admirer's stolen visits. You were sly, Mabel ; but it would need a sharper wit than yours to escape me."

Mabel blushed deeply ; for the first time she felt guilty. She knew the construction her father must have put upon her concealment, and she despaired of placing things in their true light. She was yet a mere child in worldly matters. Churchil saw his advantage, and the tale that was meant to change his daughter's love for Philip into rage and hate was now told her. Churchil possessed much of the actor's art—the plastic feature—the cheating tones. And these he employed, as he now laboured to impress his views on Mabel.

It was hard for her to preserve her faith proof against her father's skilful arguments ;

he knew well how to use that speech, which, implying the hearer's utter ignorance and liability to be imposed on, sinks those addressed, if of humble mind, still lower in their own esteem, causes them to distrust themselves, and out of their humility borrows its own strongest weapon. So, as Mabel, in her youthful, innocent diffidence and self-distrust, listened breathlessly to that world-wise, skilful man—her father's language—the expression of his eye—the very inflection of his voice, wrought on her with a fascinating influence, that compelled belief, till all that had passed between her and Philip seemed but a dream, and she began to marvel she could ever have thought it possible he had intended to marry her.

A gulf seemed suddenly to have arisen between them. In the clear light of her father's

statements, she saw the difference of their position as she had never seen it before. She, the daughter of a needy adventurer—a man who now plainly confessed to her he had lost caste among his fellow men, and was compelled to adopt disguise, and even leave the country—and Clarges a man of birth and fortune, whom an union with her must degrade in the eyes of his equals. These were the thoughts that now filled her heart with alternate grief and shame. Even when the agitation of her feelings subsided, one thing then, and ever after, seemed clear to her unselfish vision—that it was against Philip's interests to wed her. She knew now that not only mystery, but suspicion attached to her father, and was reflected on her—while, even were their reputation spotless, yet it was not one of her station he should wed.

Before her rose a vision of the woman he should marry—high-born, beautiful, admired and esteemed by all. She started from the vision, and bitter—bitter tears were in her eyes. Ah! she had been mad, indeed; but now the madness was past, and now she had cast from her the hopes so long, so vainly cherished. They would sail for America—the broad sea would flow between her and Philip and never—never more would she cross his path or endanger his prospects. Poor girl! as sustained by this noble self-sacrifice, she looked forward to that distant land;—she little knew the after agony, the hours of suffering before her, when, that sustaining impulse withdrawn, she was to feel the keen misery of an eternal separation from him she loved with all her fervent heart and soul.

For talk as we may about the sinfulness of

idolatrous human affections, there are hearts in which it is vain to stay the currents— hearts that overflow with passion—rich, and glowing, and tender—and their love is ever idolatry;—even if it be not lasting— if it change and transfer its emotions from one to another—still for the time it is idolatry—it is madness—it is to such, when un- strengthened by the loftiest principle, that love is so often fatal. Colder and less passionate natures are secure; they know not— they have never felt the fatal fascination—the smile—the glance of the eye—every look—every emotion of one human being has, at times, for another; the quick thrill that shoots through the blood and relaxes the frame; the tremulous pulsation of the heart; the madness in the brain, that has often, out of solitude and opportunity, wrought the

future misery of such burning, impassioned beings. We should be very tender, very merciful to such—the fault is so often with that blood, theirs by inheritance, or that heart which they did not create, and find it so hard to control. And then there are others like Mabel, who, with the same glowing, passionate hearts, have their feelings so elevated and strengthened by high principle, and moral rectitude, and native purity, that they are preserved from the hazard and danger of those wanting these high qualities. And to those who concentrate all love and all devotion unchangingly on one, what must the struggle and the suffering be which, tearing them from that one, consign them to lasting loneliness of heart—to an eternal separation from their earthly idol.

And when we see such sacrifices made,

should it not cause us to look on the world with tender and with loving eyes—to have firm faith in the destiny of humanity—to read the will of our Father in clearer light, that, ‘through suffering, we should be made perfect.’

They were joined at Glasgow by Martha, whom Mabel eagerly questioned of the delivery of her letter.

“The gentleman had called,” Martha replied, “the next day, and she had given him the letter. When he read it, he looked at first greatly surprised, and then greatly amused; and, after laughing a deal, and asking a few questions, had gone his way.” It was now poor Mabel’s last hope failed her.

They reached America; and, as Churchill derived an annuity from a source then unknown to Mabel, which enabled them to live

respectably, Mabel, left much alone, tried to turn away her mind from brooding hopelessly over the past, and to map out the life she would endeavour to pursue for the future. Of that life, independence was the watchword. For Mabel had renounced the thought of matrimony; she knew well that love and wedlock, and the marriage home, were not for her; and so, with the thought of matrimony, she cast away the thought dear to woman, of reposing on another's strength. Alone and unaided,—for there was much that forbade her trusting to her father's guidance—by her own woman's energy, and woman's wit, must she carve her way through life.

And now began the strengthening effects of sorrow to be visible in Mabel. Now, as the dream of the past grew gradually fainter, and more faint, the sorrow it had caused wrought

its healthful task ; and on Mabel's profounder thought there dawned the morning of a life new, and differing widely from the former simple life of the girl. Now she learned to regard life with the vision of the woman disciplined by trial,—that clear, keen vision which, at a glance, takes in all the solemnity and sweet beauty, and deep mystery of our existence—which sees that life is given for a noble use, and recognises adversity as life's great teacher, though acknowledging prosperity to have its own appointed task. Feeling, too, that happiness is not everything—that to be good, and to do good, are better than happiness. Seeing, too, that notwithstanding this, it is our duty to seek to unite happiness and virtue, and God's province to sever them as he sees fit. And often he does see fit to sever, at one cut, the threads it has taken us years of patient labour to spin together.

She found it difficult at first to decide on the mode of life that would give present scope to her lofty woman's nature, and her burning woman's heart. One resolution she had formed from the beginning, that she would not lead a merely idle lady's life. No, that elegant, frivolous, helpless, graceful existence, was not now for Mabel. There were too many voices from the past that would break in upon a quiet, sedentary life, that could only be drowned and lost in the midst of energy and excitement. She dared not fold her hands, and let thoughts and feelings crowd upon her that would break down her spirit, and render her weak and helpless. Work—work—work that would tax mind and body—was what she now sought. And long, perhaps, might she have sought, and sought in vain, had it not been for an intimacy she had contracted on board the ship which conveyed her to America.

That fortnight at sea would have seemed long and dreary to Mabel, but the kindness of these passengers had cheered for her the voyage to the far land, that loomed sullenly on her future. They were Americans — a young married pair. He a poet in thought and expression ; his wife a lovely enthusiast, enamoured of antiquity and the mother country. Thither they had travelled soon after their marriage ; and, having spent a year in England, were returning to their own land, delighted with all they had seen, and the lady's enthusiasm not a whit diminished by a closer acquaintance with Mother England. Both Henry Derwent and his wife had been attracted by Mabel's gentle and retiring demeanour, coupled with that grace and beauty that suffering had softened without impairing.

There was an innocent frankness in Caro-

line Derwent's manners that Mabel was unable to resist, yielding to a kindly impulse towards one who seemed sad and unfriended; for her father found society more congenial to him than Mabel's, in associating with those of the gentlemen passengers, whose manners had but little of the conventional stamp, seeing that they were a brotherhood of disappointed Chartist leaders, on their voyage to the land of liberty. Mrs. Derwent had early sought to show attention to Mabel; and few, however immersed in sad reflections, could repel the sympathy of that innocent young wife—so fond of her husband, so light of spirit, so elate with her wedded happiness, and seeing all things bright with the sunshine of her own unclouded nature.

Before the voyage was over, Mabel had received a pressing invitation from both to

visit them at their country house, on the banks of the Hudson. Thither, shortly after her arrival in New York, Mabel had gone ; but, incapable of deception, she had during the voyage confided to Mrs. Derwent the whole story of her life, as far as she knew it, and this confidence had but served to deepen Caroline's interest into an almost sisterly affection. To the house of her new friends Mabel went, therefore, with a heart lightened of some of its load, and cheered by the sympathy which threw a light on her onward path.

With Mr. Derwent and his wife resided his mother and sister ; the latter on the eve of marriage to an accomplished gentleman of New York ; and here Mabel half forgot her own griefs in the contemplation of a family happiness over which, as yet, had fallen no shade. It was one of those bright pictures of

American felicity, of which the New World possesses not a few.

Here, too, often came many whose names are, even in England, 'Household Words.' Here Mabel met many of the poets, the essayists, the orators of New England. Men of rare and beautiful qualities—of captivating address—of high breeding. Here came the deep thinkers, the brilliant speakers, the great intelligences of that great land. Many an Englishwoman has, like Mabel, pictured that land peopled with hard, utilitarian, prosaic natures, without romance, and without beauty. How different from this sullen aspect was the reality that greeted her, midst the society she mixed with at the Derwents! Often, as she sat listening to the speech of E——, or L——, or P——, there would flit before her vision the small, old-fashioned parlour,

and the face of him from whom the vast Atlantic parted her—then the present scene faded from before her, and its voices were unheard; for dearer, sweeter tones were with her—and nobler thoughts, and tenderer to her. And from this dream she would awake to again feel the necessity of exertion, of some absorbing employment, that would leave no time for thought or revery such as this.

But some fair reader may ask, could she not have found employment? could she not have worked, or read, or written, or taught, at Sunday or infant schools? And to this we can only reply:—that in some natures the soul and the imagination require to be satisfied, and that such quiet, pleasant, domestic pursuits do not yield these food sufficient. Such occupations might have contented a pure, placid, dove-like Lady Jane Grey; but would they have satis-

fied a Sappho or a De Staël? Can they satisfy any glowing, earnest, impassioned nature, any heart that beats with all its might, any pulse that throbs passionately with a load of emotion—that seeks to discharge itself through the medium of some pursuit as wild and soul-absorbing as the emotion itself.

And through all the range of woman's employ, there is but one pursuit that, when the throbbing heart and eager soul make appeal, answers back in accents as deep, as thrilling, as earnest as their own. What that is we shall see presently.

CHAPTER XXIV.

ACROSS THE ATLANTIC.

ABOUT a year after their arrival in New York, Martha was seized with fever, from which she never rallied. Mabel watched by the old servant's death bed: but though she more than once seemed anxious to communicate some piece of intelligence, she had either wandered into delirium, when she commenced to speak, or, at a later stage of the disease, been too weak to articulate intelligibly. If she had any secret it died with her; still a

few broken words had reached Mabel's ear—not sufficient, indeed, to convey any clear meaning, and yet they did, at first, awake a fevered hope in her breast, for Martha had muttered something about a letter, and this was followed by Philip's name, and then, straining her dim eyes on Mabel, she had asked for pardon for the wrong she had done her. And Mabel had called back that dim morning when Martha's conduct had puzzled her, and the suspicion she had then felt.

And if it should be so—if that letter had never been delivered, never received, as Martha had described; if Philip even now loved—even now mourned for her! She hastily stifled the hope that was rising in her heart, and refused to listen to its whispers. She felt how poor was the foundation on which to raise a superstructure like this. But,

from the time of Martha's death, her mind was more disturbed, her spirits more fevered. She caught herself restlessly watching her father's movements. The fear that his life had been, and yet remained, stained with some guilt or dishonour, harassed and preyed upon her; and one evening, when they were together, she besought Churchil to confide in her, to tell her of his past life, and to keep nothing secret from her. It may be that he was in an unusual mood that evening, or that Mabel's earnest address wrought on him, and compelled him to comply with her request; for, after fixing his dark and haughty gaze inquiringly on her face, he said, with a careless smile, "Come, then; you shall hear all you want to know. It is not so black either." Churchil's was no uncommon story. It is as well, therefore, that, shortening his somewhat spun-out relation, I should briefly tell it in my own words.

Gilbert Langly's father had been the second son of a Yorkshire gentleman, whose estate was entailed on his eldest son. On the death of old Squire Langly, the second son, Ralph, found himself possessed of ten thousand pounds. Between the brothers, George and Ralph Langly, there had from an early age existed a mutual and ill-concealed contempt. George, from a boy, had been of a sedate, measured, serious turn. He grew up into a tall, slight, dark-visaged, bilious-complexioned youth; of grave saturnine manners, and stern religious principles. Ralph, on the contrary, was of a joyous, impetuous nature, addicted to field sports, not disinclined to wine, and a hearty admirer of the fair sex. He was handsome, too, of a strong muscular frame, a sanguine complexion, keen blue eyes, and waving brown hair.

From half-despising, half-envying his brother's beauty, and strength, and gaiety, George Langly grew rapidly to entertain a very decided dislike to Ralph; who, in his turn, laughed at his brother's condemnation of his ungodly ways, and did not scruple to tell him he was only fit to put on a surplice, and preach to old women. Some years after their father's death, Ralph married—of course for love, and a girl without a penny. A few years more, and he was deep in difficulties; and the brother, to whom he applied, refused to assist him. Again a few years went on, and Ralph Langly had been borne from the jail, where he died, to a humble grave in C—— churchyard, where, in a few months, his widow was placed beside him.

They left no child but Gilbert, whom, perhaps struck by some pang of late remorse,

his uncle adopted. Gilbert (the father of Mabel) was a boy of a shrewd and peculiar temperament; he was then twelve years old, and able to draw his own conclusions from all he saw and heard. And in the first place, he entertained a deeply-rooted conviction that the man who had allowed his brother to die in a jail, must be a very hard-hearted man, and actuated by very bad principles. Imbued with this conviction he came to Langly Park, and hitherto knowing, and having heard little of religion, he there met with the profession of it, unfortunately for him, in its strictest and most repelling aspect. Mr. Langly had adopted, as most congenial to his own disposition, the most extreme Calvinistic creed which had led him to secede from the Established Church, in which he had been brought up, and attend the meeting-house of a sect

holding its doctrines in their darkest form. This was the religious atmosphere into which a shrewd observant boy, with a wrong twist in his disposition, was brought for training and discipline. Here, on this gloomy air, he saw, stand out against its darkness, as if written in letters of fire, the story of his father's wrongs, and his mother's uncomplaining heart-broken life, unrelieved and unpitied by him who proclaimed himself one of the elect—favoured with an assurance of his own salvation.

Gilbert Langly was not one of those who, out of this darkness, fight their way to light, and, from this false view of religion, turn to a truer one. Like the deist King of Prussia and the men of his day—he could feel the error, but he could not attain to the light—and there met him no gifted, thoughtful, gentle-hearted teacher, who might then have saved, and

taught, and guided his youthful, and yet pliable nature.

This life went on a little—then the youth suddenly insulted and defied his uncle, and was banished from his house. Chance threw him in the way of a company of players; he followed and shared their life, yet never losing an air of native nobility and high breeding, that shone over all his acquired depravity with a strange grace and lustre, even in the eyes of those, his graceless comrades, and gained him many enthusiastic plaudits from the rustic audiences that assembled in barns and wooden play-booths. This method of life he pursued for more than two years. He had then married a lovely girl, of Portuguese extraction, who had lately been added to their troop. From his wandering life he had gained much information, and

added much to his native quickness. His wit now came to his support. Since joining the company of players, he had taken his mother's name of 'Churchil.' He now wrote to his uncle, describing what his life had been, and threatening to again appear with his bride at Langly Park. In writing thus, he knew what chord he touched in the baronet—what master passion he appealed to.

He had rightly estimated Mr. Langly's love of respectability, and as justly concluded that, sooner than have his nephew, accompanied by the wife he had picked up from a play-booth, appear before the servants at the Park, he would accept the alternative of binding himself to pay a small annuity, sufficient to release him from his present precarious method of gaining his daily bread.

This income, Langly Churchill had con-

tinued punctually to receive. Poor Maria did not live long to enjoy it. Her death affected Churchil, and awoke some better feelings in his breast. He determined to guard her infant from all impure influences, and educate her as much as possible in feminine tastes and accomplishments.

From the loves of Somerset and the guilty Countess of Essex—sprang a being fair and pure as ever walked on earth—that Lady Anne Carr, who gave birth to the Patriot-Martyr Lord William Russell. Was it strange, then, that of parents such as Churchil and Maria, should have been born one, rich as Mabel, in all noble qualities and feminine virtues?

So far, we have closely followed Churchil in his narrative; but it here becomes expedient to digress from his account, in order to afford the reader some necessary information, which he was unable to give Mabel.

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During the period Churchil was travelling with the players, the company had stopped some time in a country-town, where he met an old and *very early* acquaintance. Martha Lowell had been brought up in his mother's family, had married at the same time as her young mistress, and having nursed Gilbert, resided with Mrs. Ralph Langly till her death, and Gilbert's adoption by his uncle. She had, since then, kept a shop for the sale of haberdashery, the profits of which supported her, and her daughter Mary—Gilbert Langly's foster sister. To Martha, Gilbert related all that had led to his adoption of a player's life. She listened with deep interest, and Gilbert became a constant visitor at her house, where a friendship quickly sprang up between him and Mary Lowell. Churchil insisted on treating Mary to the play. Wiser than Mary

have been dazzled by their first visit to a play-house—more gifted ones than Mary, have looked back and traced the spring of a life-long love, rising from gratitude to the friend who first took them to the theatre.

We will not linger on the tale. Churchill was then at the height of his passion for the young Portuguese—a creature of rare beauty, and strange innocence, considering her position—his marriage took place during their stay at Cranford.

It was then Martha first knew how intensely she had desired Mary's union with Churchill; how eagerly she had hoped to see her pretty daughter wed a gentleman—the son of her loved mistress—the boy she had nursed—whom she so admired and gloried in. Poor Martha! insensibly this had become the day-dream of her existence—the one speck of

romance in the shop-woman's prosaic life. She had watched the growth of their intimacy, had jested with Mary on the subject, and counted over her savings again and again with exultation, at the thought of how she would surprise the young pair on their wedding-day, when she poured the coins into Mary's lap. She had planned, too, how she might extend her business, and confine her own expenditure within the smallest possible limits, so as to supply them with the means of living comfortably. And when she was disappointed, and the players had left the town; and she saw Mary droop, and pine, and fall into ill-health, and become so delicate, that a cold caught in the winter soon fastened on her lungs,—she did not then, nor even when, on her death-bed, the poor girl confessed she traced the commencement of her delicacy to

her secret fretting after Churchil ; nor when she saw the coffin brought through her doors, and carried out again, and went with it to the churchyard, and then returned to her house, now cold, and still, and desolate—not then nor ever did she curse or hate Churchil ; he was still her boy—her poor misled boy ; aye *misled*—and here her hate found vent, and she cursed his wife as the cause of her desolation.

When Churchil pondered to whom he might entrust his child, then two years old, he thought of Martha Lowell, and again sought Cranford. He was shocked to hear of Mary's death, though ignorant of the cause ; and to see Martha's altered, stony appearance ; for she had then begun to assume that ashy, corpse-like look, which never again forsook her. To Martha's care he consigned the little Mabel, believing that her fondness for him would lead her to regard his child with affection.

He was mistaken. With suppressed and horrible joy, Martha heard that Mary's rival was dead. Then she looked on her child, and felt hatred still stirring in her heart. Yet, she undertook the charge, for her old love for Churchill was still strong, and she thought this might be a tie that would, at times, lead him from his wild, wandering life, to her abode. The poor withered heart yet clung to some object that it could love.

It needs not that we should follow Churchill's steps for the next five years. When he again presented himself in Martha's home, he bore the marks of severe and recent illness on his pallid face and wasted form. Many have risen from the bed of sickness 'wiser and better men.' Perhaps, it was so with him. He spoke of wishing for quiet and rest, and asked to see Mabel. She came before him in the

bloom and innocent freshness of seven summers. He proposed retiring to some retired neighbourhood with her ; and to Martha's proposal of disposing of her business, which had been declining since Mary's death, and accompanying them, he listened coldly. The truth was, he thought it might be difficult to preserve the distinction that he desired should henceforth exist between Martha and his daughter ; sensible of how much he had done to extinguish the *prestige* of birth in his own person, he yet was desirous to revive it for Mabel's sake. Finding it difficult otherwise to resist Martha's solicitations, he frankly told her his feelings. She heard, without betraying any displeasure, and consented to accompany them in the capacity of a servant.

At an early period of our story we briefly glanced at Churchill's after history. How-

ever much he may have desired amendment, the bent he had acquired and fostered in youth, proved too strong for him completely to resist. Old and profligate companions often crossed his path—and, ever in their society, his taste for dissipation was re-kindled.

Now, too, the reader may understand something of Martha's feelings towards Mabel. We may comprehend how this woman regarded the child of her whom she deemed the author of all her own misfortunes. How, too, when their bitter feelings were softening down, Churchill's plans for Mabel roused them in more than their former bitterness. And he may, in some measure, picture to himself the daily mortification her menial position caused to the mother of Mary Lowell.

Time passed on, and Philip Clarges ap-

peared on the scene. At first Martha encouraged the secret intimacy between him and Mabel—for she judged of Philip as of other men, and deemed Mabel like other girls. Then, as the truth broke on her, and she found that the very circumstances out of which she had hoped to work Mabel's disgrace, were but tending to her elevation, she changed her tactics, and acquainted Churchil with the visits which his own absence from home (he was, at this time, deeply involved in a scheme for improving his fortunes) prevented his becoming acquainted with. It was not difficult to arouse Churchil's suspicions, and cause him to see this intimacy in the light she desired. Since she could not work Mabel's ruin by a continuance of this intercourse, she could, at least, make her miserable by its suspension.

Churchil, on the eve of the most hazardous stroke of his life, shrunk from its possible consequences ; but it was now too late for retreat. In case of a failure, however, he had all prepared for flight, determined, with Mabel, to seek a new country, where he might once more start afresh on life, and, at the same time, rescue her from the snares of Clarges.

Led on by his associates, men, some of good connections, but all embarrassed in means, and of reckless character, and tempted by his own difficulties, and yet more by a wish to make some provision for Mabel ; Churchill had from time to time involved himself with them in schemes of at least a questionable nature, if not certainly amenable to the law. In the boldest of these plans he had embarked a short time previous to his flight, as we may well name it, from Clarges. It had then

suddenly come to his knowledge, that one or two of his associates had committed themselves to a project of a far deeper dye than any he had ever allowed himself to contemplate, a project involving him as an accomplice in forgery.

Although innocent of all part in the fraud, yet, on hearing of the apprehension of his acquaintances, he had too great reason to fear that he would be involved in some of its consequences. Had he then stood alone in the world, he would have remained to brave the storm; but the fearful consequences that would accrue to Mabel, should guilt stain or ruin fall on him, determined him to leave England with all possible promptitude and precaution. With the concluding portion of his narrative, the reader is already acquainted. Of the deception employed against Philip and

Mabel, Churchil omitted any mention, and of the feelings that had actuated Martha, he was himself ignorant. Mabel had listened to her father's narrative with deep and painful interest. And she acted wisely when, suppressing any expression of the grief that was in her soul, she spoke tenderly of his errors, dwelling much on the bitter feelings that had partly led him into a life of so much unhappiness.

END OF VOL. II.

